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A
COURSE OF LECTURES
ON THE
INSPIRATION
OF
THE SCRIPTURES.

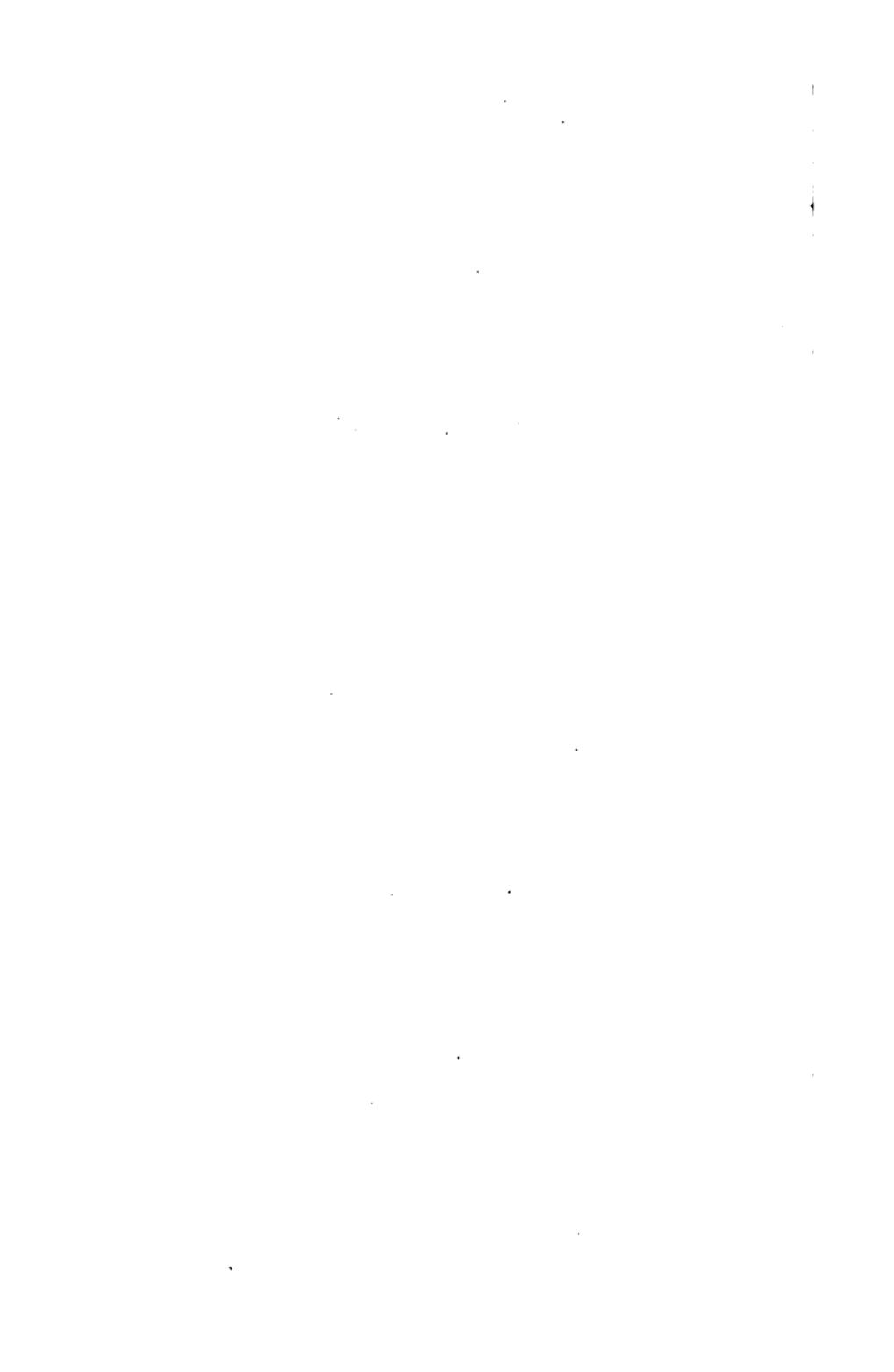
Published in Queen Street Chapel, Rose Hill, on Sunday Evening, in April and May, 1852.

BY THE REV.
R. S. BAYLEY, F.S.A.

LONDON,
PARTRIDGE AND OAKES, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1852.







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TO

THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

ASSEMBLING IN

QUEEN STREET CHAPEL, RATCLIFF,

THE FOLLOWING LECTURES, ON

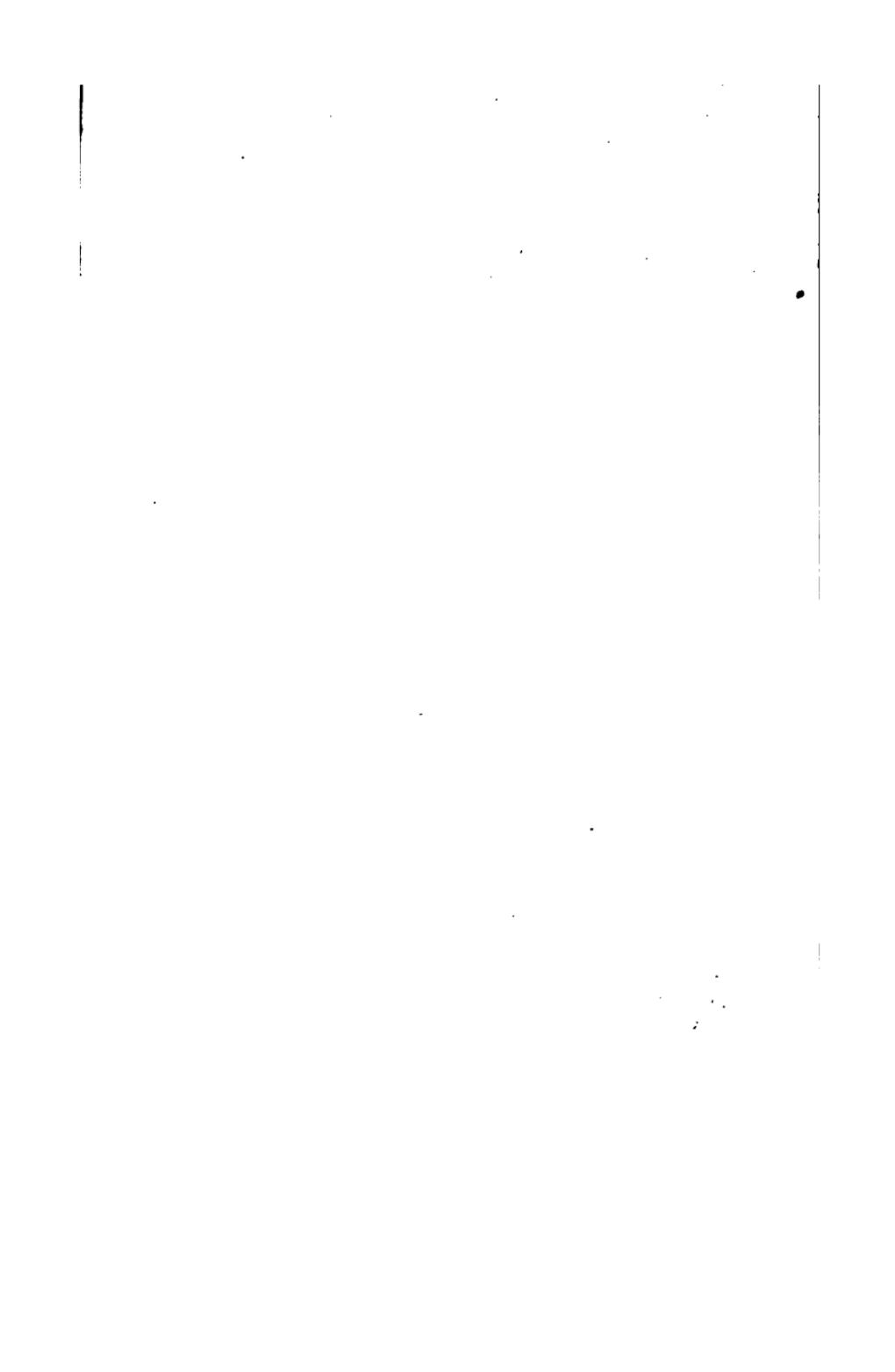
THE FIRST FUNDAMENTAL ARTICLE OF THE CHRISTIAN

FAITH,

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED, BY

THEIR FAITHFUL FELLOW-SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



P R E F A C E.

The following lectures, delivered in the ordinary course of pastoral addresses to his congregation, stand in need, as the author is deeply aware, of all the clemency that christian candour ought to be expected to give; but they ask no indulgence from the opponents of the Inspired records, either on account of the form into which they have been cast, or of the facts and reasonings on which they are built. *Prælectiones ad cleros*, the author had no right to offer; and arguments purely scholastic, would have been as inappropriate to the audience, as a defence of our sacred books, constructed mainly on the ἀντοξέφα of antiquity, or of modern theologians, would have been deemed insufficient. One course only, therefore, remained,—to present the evidence for the Inspiration of the Scriptures, in such a form, as christians of intelligence would readily appreciate, and which those oppugners of the doctrine, whose convictions are genuine, would be likely to examine.

Should another edition of these Lectures be required, the author cherishes the hope that he will be able to offer the substance of that further evidence, to which he has referred at pages 67 and 137, as arising from the

examination of the several books of Scripture, individually considered. It is much to be regretted that this labor has never been undertaken; especially as many sceptical writers object to deal with the books of Scripture as a fasciculus, and flatter themselves that by untying the bundle, they would be able, by *Aesop's* hint, to overcome the authority of the Bible. We shall be happy to yield to this demand, confident as we are that we shall gain immensely by such an inquisition; and that the rejectors of the Scriptures, either in whole, or partially, have nothing to hope for by this course, and everything to lose. Many christian writers have done immense disservice to the cause of the Bible, by their rash and ill-considered concessions on the topic of its Inspiration; they have consented to act only on the defensive, where they ought to have carried the assault boldly into the quarters of the enemy; and while they have won a transient reputation for spurious candour, they have had the mortification to see their works oftener quoted by the antagonists of the Bible, than by its friends. Modern notions of propriety forbid the specification of names, but we have the solace of knowing that favorite "calves of the people" do not last for ever.

No doubt some christians will regard these Lectures as lost labour, believing as they do, that they merely prove what no one doubts. Such, however, are no competent judges; for they cannot be aware how the hosts of the enemy are mustering, far and near, to give us battle for all the vital doctrines of our faith. The learning of Germany, the wit of France, and the industrious thought of England, have been summoned under a new

staff of leaders, to this great conflict; and though we are confident that, like all preceding struggles, this will end in the higher intellectual position of Christianity, we must remember that if we fight no longer against the Moor and the Pagan, we have to contend with false churchmen, with able men of science and art, with practised masters of logic, and subtle declaimers, with nature-worshippers, and traditionists, with erudite schoolastics of no faith, and a world of slip-shod reasoners who think it their interest to destroy the credit of a volume that aspires to command human credence, and to legislate for the whole region of moral life, and that admits no appeal from its authority. A glance at the literature of the past forty-five years will show that it is animated by a spirit of bolder and more profound hostility to the evangelistic theory than the church of Christ has witnessed at any previous time; and the author of the following pages is of opinion that it will also shew that English christians are more indebted, for masterly refutation of the various assaults on the biblical canon, to such writers as Gausseen, Grandpierre, and Vinet, than to many of their own teachers. One question alone involves all the antagonist literature of our age,—*Is the whole Bible an Inspired book?* If it be, *all* that it contains is authoritative; if it be not, nothing that it teaches is infallible. And it is because the author believes that this is the great point towards which christian investigation should be adequately and primarily directed, that he has kindled his small beacon-fire.

London, May 27th, 1852.

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L E C T U R E S
ON THE
INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

FIRST LECTURE.

"IF THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE NOT AN INSPIRED VOLUME, JESUS CHRIST WAS EITHER HIMSELF DECEIVED, OR HE DECEIVED THE JEWS AND HIS FOLLOWERS."

"All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."—2. Tim. iii, 16.

My object in the delivery of these Lectures is to defend the variously-assailed doctrine of the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and to put the defence briefly, in that form which appears to me conclusive. I solicit your attention to this most important article of our faith, because it is its foundation; and I shall need your patience and candor, for I have not sought the sentiments guaranteed by illustrious names, but give utterance chiefly to what are my own. Least of all the thousands of Israel, the speaker's heart knows too well is he; but Truth, like the Hebrew angels, is wont to sojourn with the afflicted, the poor, and

the obscure, even when it would be welcome in palaces. What I utter, I most firmly believe; and what I am about to submit to you, is not the flippant etching of the moment, but thoughts that have often been weighed and winnowed; that were born in the first instance in groans and tears, but that have now grown to gladden the heart which they have once anguished, and to be the rock on which I am emboldened to face that great invisible world whose portals will shortly open to receive the preacher and his audience.

For what class of persons, then, are these Four Lectures intended? Certainly not exclusively for the Atheist, who denies the existence of a God, and therefore shuts out the question whether God has spoken to man. For he exalts the physical universe into a deity, and claims for his opinions the authority of Inspiration; whose heaven is the grave, whose immortality is annihilation; whose saints are Paine, Carlisle, and Voltaire; whose prophets are Chubb, Hobbes, and Rousseau; whose poets are Byron and Shelley;—a sect that neither worships nor prays; that in the hour of grief has no God to call upon; that looks upon Biblical history as a huge magnificent lie; and fantastically believes that the paralyzed arm of reason will work out a cure for all the evils of the future. Nor are these addresses solely designed for the Deist, who is simple enough to believe that God could not address a revelation to man, or that he would not if he could; or that if he could and would speak to his human family, would yet never be understood, nor ever sufficiently prove that He had so spoken. Nor do we design mainly to address that pert horde of Free-thinkers, whose reading is confined to a newspaper or a novel, whose church is the tavern, whose religion is all debate, whose reasonings are steeped in beer, whose hatred of evil is concentrated into acrimonious aversion to clergymen, whose morality is chiselled by Franklin, whose fellowship is that of Jolly Brethren or Odd Fellows, and who, under the pretence of taking more exalted views of God, of nature, and of providence, neglect the Scriptures, which alone "make

wise to salvation." And there are those, even within the Christian community itself, to whom these Lectures can scarcely be addressed,—men who are enamored of the spirit of German philosophical theology,—who, before they will believe a doctrine, demand the removal from it of all difficulties,—who insist on dissecting the Scriptures more unmercifully than they do Livy or Xenophon, Guicciardini's History, or Monstrelet's Chronicles; who ignore Moses and the Prophets, and will yet yield a deference to Semler's tomahawk criticism, or to Jean Paul's raw conjectures, or to Carlisle's syllabub of collo-quintada and jalap, which they refuse to the soarings of Isaiah or Paul, the solemn histories of Matthew or Luke, or even the more authoritative words of Christ himself.

For whom, then, are these four addressees intended? Chiefly for the ordinary members of this congregation, the young men and women who are thirsting with the ardor of a new generation for fresh views of truth, and who are yet in danger of being decoyed by some of the syren voices of spurious philosophy; for the earnest parents, suffering the keen anguish to which the conscientious heart is obnoxious, when their sons and daughters are bursting into virile age without a personal religion; to those occupiers of these pews who have neither had the advantage of a devout education, nor opportunities of theological study; for those whose faith in the Inspiration of the Scriptures may have been shaken, either by the unsound theories with which they have met, or whose judgment has required a more thorough investigation of the subject than is implied in too many theological compilations; and, if the lecturer may presume to say as much, for those intelligent strayers from other churches who may not find at home what perhaps they may accidentally meet with elsewhere. To such these Lectures are addressed.

The Old Testament is composed of thirty-nine small books, together called the Old Covenant, and is received by Christians and Jews as a revelation from God for the use of the human race. Of twenty-nine of these books

we know the authors, but of the following ten the authors are unknown to us; namely, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Job, and Esther. That the Old Testament existed in the times of Christ is evident from his frequently quoting it; from the account which Josephus, a Jewish historian of that age, gives of the volume, and which had been translated into Greek nearly three hundred years before the time of Christ, for the use of those Jews who lived in Egypt and in other parts of the Greco-Romano empire. We know also that the Old Testament existed before the times of Christ, from the notice taken of it by Pagan writers; as well as from the fact that Christianity had no sooner appeared, than it was attacked by Jews and Pagans with quotations from the Old Testament, and also from the writings of Philo, an Alexandrine Jew, and from the early rabbinic compilations of the Jews themselves. But these books may have existed since the time of Christ, or even before his time, nay, even from the days of Moses, and yet may not be Inspired. We admit it. The mere length of time a book has existed, neither makes it true nor false. But it being an undoubted fact that this Old Testament is received by Jews and Christians as the infallible word of God, we ask how it came to be so authoritative, and to be believed that it was written by "holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost?" There must have been some grounds for the Jews believing this to be an Inspired book and others not so. What were those grounds? Were the Jews a very credulous people, destitute of acuteness, and easily deceived? Are they such now? Jesus Christ accuses some of the best of them in his time with being "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken." We find the Jews therefore in the time of Jesus what we see them now,—a people proverbially opinionated, and indisposed to change their belief. Such we have the testimony of Pagan writers they were before the period of Christ. One of their writers of that age said, "We all believe our Scriptures to be from God, and are ready to sacrifice our

lives for their maintenance." How, then, did the Jews come to form the opinion that the Old Testament was an Inspired book of God? Men generally hate a book which condemns their practices, and which does not flatter their prejudices. Such a book is never popular, and never can be while human nature remains what it is. The Old Testament condemns idolatry, avarice, lying, stealing, adultery, swearing, oppression, and hypocrisy,—crimes to which the Jews were, according to their own Scriptures, frequently prone; and yet, though men never love a book that condemns them, we find the nation of the Jews declaring that this Old Testament, notwithstanding it was written by twenty-nine different authors, was the infallible word of Jehovah. *Now there must have been some extraordinary reasons to explain this paradox.* Admit that the Old Testament, many of whose writers performed miracles, while others delivered prophecies, had won its way to the judgment of the Jewish nation, whose practises it yet condemned, and whom it threatened with expatriation and reproach, and you have a solid explanation of the fact that the Jews received the Old Testament as Inspired. But if you deny this explanation, then you raise this marvellous difficulty, that a nation proverbially proud and inflexible in its opinions, singularly disinclined to receive new ideas, accredited a number of books with being a revelation from God, though they had no proof that they were so, and though the books themselves were filled with histories dishonorable to the Jewish people, and with censures on the vices to which they were inclined. It was to the interest of the Jews to reject the book, because it dictated to them, checked their inclinations, urged them to do what was not pleasing to them, and perpetuated their infamy by its records. That they did not follow their interest, their natural pride, and vicious inclination, in opposing and suppressing the Old Testament, can only be accounted for by believing that their minds were over-powered with the conviction that these books were truly Inspired by Jehovah. But the Old Testament may have been regarded by the Jews as an Inspired volume, and yet

not be such. I admit that the Inspiration of the book does not necessarily follow from the Jews believing it to be so. Let us now, therefore, turn to the question of Inspiration itself awhile, before we come to the subject of the present Lecture.

The great importance which the doctrine of Inspiration has assumed at the present time is no commendation to the spirit of the age. That it should be more generally disbelieved, shows the growth of an irreligious temper; and that it should be attacked with more literary and logical weapons, proves the direction in which this irreligious temper flows; and that the doctrine, in the church itself, should have become so philosophized and mixed up with the jargon of hypercriticism, is a mournful indication that the vital life of the church is less obvious, and that Christian unity and love, purity, benevolence, and zeal, must be on the subsidence, or this question of the parchments could not be so prominent. The watchmen must have slept, or the enemies could not have occupied the citadels; the shepherds must have paid more regard to their sylvan reeds than to their crooks, or their flocks would not have been so divided and scattered; or, in other words, many teachers must have been treacherous, indolent, or incompetent, or their disciples would have been in no danger from the voluble babbling of the German philosopher, or the transcendental reveries of modern romance. Germany,—craven at the feet of Napoleon, vassal of the Fredericks, the Josephs, or the Cæsars, of baronial descent,—having relinquished its civil and religious life and liberties, has been content to live on the bitter cud of its discomfited reflections, to foster its imaginative tendency, to inamorate itself of romantic story, to create a philosophy and a world from words, to find recreation in criticism, to excogitate wealth and fame from ever-increasing diatribes of novelty, and has vomited forth upon Christendom a mass of putrid literature, grotesque and gaudy, verbal and subtle, irreverent and profound, imaginative and historic, to which we may attribute the fact that all the great articles of Christian belief have been assailed, and chiefly

the doctrines of Inspiration, the vicarious work of Christ, and the influence of the Holy Ghost. Great will be the ultimate benefit of the reaction to the cause of truth; but in the meantime many are the skirmishes which the church must fight with mock learning, with pretensive philosophy, and with masked piety. And fight we must, and do most willingly, or we betray our cause; and woe to the mistaken quietist who would sleep while the enemy mines his walls, bribe him by unworthy concessions, or dissuade our soldiers from the battle.

It will materially aid our enquiry if we glance at the progress of an *uninspired* book, and at the nature of the authority it exercises when it has become popular. Let us select Bacon's History of Learning, Milton's Paradise Lost, Locke's Philosophy, Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and Hume's Philosophy. Now these are all popular books, and form a part of every good library; they have gone through many editions, and their names are familiar to almost all,—their contents to every decently-read man. As long as any books are popular, they are read and quoted; many admire them; but many others, of equal mental power, do not, and for some cause they never quote them, and consider them, when quoted, of no authority. Now let a controversy arise on any question on which these books can be quoted. You will see how eagerly, by some, their authority is produced. But their antagonists repudiate the books. If demanded why they refuse to be bound by the opinions of Milton, Bacon, Locke, Hume, or Gibbon, they reply that they are of no authority; they admit there are many fine passages in the books, but deny that they are inspired. If asked, by what book will you be guided? the opponent of the names just mentioned will perhaps quote Shakespeare, Hallam, Scott, Dryden, or Voltaire; but his opponent refuses, in his turn, to admit the authority of these books, and denies that they are absolutely true or inspired. Foiled by each other in determining the controversy by an appeal to books, perhaps the combatants agree to be guided by reason alone, without books, or by several.

living judges. But when they come to the proof, one avers that a proposition is reasonable, which the other denies; and the *viva voce* judges of the question give no better a satisfaction. How is it you cannot agree in this important dispute? asks a bystander. The reply is, because we have not an infallible authority to determine what is truth, what is pure reason, or what is just: we are merely fighting a war of opinions and words.

Now just in this predicament would man be in all his moral opinions, if there were no Book of Inspiration to end the strife of moral controversy. Unregenerate men believe in the perfection and competence of reason; but Christians believe that reason partakes of the effects of the fall, that it is in an imperfect though an improving state, and that reason alone could never find out God, nor infallibly guide itself. It must be admitted, then, that it is most desirable to possess an Inspired book, if possible; and it is our duty alike to search for that precious treasure if it exist, or to repudiate any volume that claims to be Inspired, but which evidently lacks the proof. Has God, then, ever spoken to our race?—when?—where?—how often?—and on what topics?—are the rapid and important interrogatives that rise in the earnest soul. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,” is the declaration of one of the most memorable men that ever drank at our fountains or gazed at the sun. No one but an Atheist can doubt the great truth contained in these words,—so great that it seems to need no outward evidence that it is a divine sentiment. Look, then, at an earthly father; does he, imperfect and selfish as he is, turn his children forth into the world without arming them with instruction? Does he wait for tardy and remote experience to teach his children, or does he not rather forearm them with his own wisdom? The more virtuous and wise the father is, the more desirous is he to instruct his offspring. He knows how easy victims they will be without knowledge, and what a power and a happiness it is to begin life with right ideas. The father who refuses to teach his child, we all deem a monster who

might learn from every one of the brutes the duty of parental culture. Man is the child of God. Transfer these parental feelings to the divine nature, and, remembering that man is to live for ever, and remembering also the vast issues of his moral deeds, say whether you can doubt for a moment that God has spoken to man. How? is the next important question; and the Old Testament tells us it was by his own reason, when that was sufficient; and when reason was inadequate, by dreams, by visions, by miracles, by prophecies, by angels, and by extraordinary phenomena in the material and moral government of the world.

If God have ever spoken thus to men, it must have been only to men in the earlier ages of the human race, and never since, and thus have left all the later descendants to perish for lack of knowledge; or he has spoken to the earlier ages in writing, so that what he said once is the lesson for ever, and as applicable and efficacious to the later ages as to the first persons to whom he made his communications. This is the mode that our reason would expect and approves. The spoken word perishes; the written word lives for ever. Now according to the views of the Christian church of all denominations, this is the method by which God has spoken, through the Jews to the Gentiles; from Sinai to London, to Paris, to Polynesia; through David to every adulterer; through Cain to every murderer; through Korah to every lover of gold; from the palaces of Belshazzar and Pharaoh, to all palaces and all governors; by the ruins of Carthage and Tyre, to all cities, however ventose and cloud-capped their towers; and out of the hovel of Elijah and the nook of Jonah, to every fretful, disobedient, or impatient servant of God. *Ex uno discit omnes.* The lessons of men are repeated and repeatable, and yet die, for all flesh is grass; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

Now to admit that God may have spoken to man, and yet maintain that he has not accompanied his communications with adequate evidence that he has so spoken, is to nullify his commands, his promises, and his predictions.

Every great author takes care to let the world know who has addressed it. Monarchs send their messages by well-accredited agents. The Old Testament represents Jehovah as jealous to discriminate between his own words and the words of men. Jeremiah was commanded to declare, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." Jeremiah xxiii, 28. Whatever Jehovah may have addressed to men without the requisite concomitant evidence of its divine origin, must, if preserved at all, sink to the level of human compositions, to be adopted by some and rejected by others, and so to falsify its design of being the law to the earth. The same evil follows if we admit that the word of God was addressed to man at first and accompanied with requisite proof that it was a divine message, if we maintain that the evidence is now lost, or has become so obscure or attenuated that Heaven's stamp mark is no longer decipherable on the record. As long as the word lives, there must be in existence the evidence that it is the word of God. Had the evidence been geographical or phenomenal, the revolutions of time and nature might have abraded the proof; but the witness is within the volume itself in great part, and the complement remains in the imperishable external history of the grand document itself.

And now let us turn to examine some of the contents of the Old Testament. I shall not now propose any emendations in words, in numbers, or in geographic or historic allusions. I accept with unfeigned and intense gratitude the book as a whole; and hostile as I might once be, and imperfectly acquainted with it as I confess now, I know and have experienced sufficient to be assured that in casting my lot with the beloved people who believe this book, I am profoundly assured that "we have not received cunningly devised fables," either in the raptures of Elijah, the visions of Moses, the bursts of Isaiah, or in the sweet and sylvan story of Abraham, or in the soul-heaving tragedies that befell the Houses of Nebuchadnezzar, of Solomon, or of Ahab. For the present I omit some of the

intermediate passages in the lesser historic books of the bible; the mordant proverbs of Lemuel, the sublime reasonings of Job, the brilliant lyrics of Asaph and David, the eloquent simplicity of Samuel's life, and the rapid and gurgitant sketches of the Judges, those feeble successors of the mighty Moses, and his glorious disciple Joshua. But omitting them, I call your attention to three departments of knowledge in the Old Testament of which reason could not be the author, and which therefore must be inspired or the whole book is the most consummate imposture that ever deceived men. I refer to the *ante-historic*, the *predictive*, and the *supernatural parts* of the Old Testament. Suffer me to explain. Moses did not live till nearly twenty-two centuries after the world's creation. Jewish history may be properly said to have begun with Moses; but it did not begin in Greece till one thousand years after, and twelve hundred in Rome. The life of a nation, before it begins to write its history, we call the *ante-historic period*; and the *ante-historic period* of all the old nations, except the Jews, is pure fable; hence the stories of Saturn and Cybele, the stern Fates, the weird Sisters, the seductive and wanton goddesses of Olympus, the freaks of Mercury, and the gloomy stories of Acherontic caves, and Stygian lakes, all which are but the wild etchings of fancy on the vacant walls of antiquity. The same folly would have been the substance of the earlier books of Jewish history, if there had been no Moses. Now how does it happen that the twenty-two centuries that preceded Moses' lifetime, became, in his pages, tangible, simple, and graphic history, without either allegory or myth? It is common to say that Adam might tell Methuselah's father, that his son might inform Noah, that his sons could transmit the tradition to the father of Abraham, and that some of Jacob's sons might impart the chronicles of the world to Moses' grandfather. I grant that this is barely possible, but I wish to know who was to superintend the passage of the truth through all these channels, few as they were? for, good men as they were, we know how frail is memory, how fickle the judgment, how

prone to color is the imagination; and I could not repose my faith on so precarious a transmission of hereditary chronicles. We have not so learned Christ; and we boldly ask in reply, who taught Adam how he was created, and the order of creation itself? or who taught Noah how the flood was effected? Moses has filled this ante-historic period of twenty-two centuries with facts, dates, events, living agents, and the mode of Divine procedure in several instances. Here then is a section of the Old Testament, not, however, confined to the five books of Moses, for there are often fragmentary notices of the ante-historic period of our race scattered in other books, which reason, however cultivated, could never have known. Reason cannot guess what has been without records. From geologic vestiges we can trace a deluge; from human skeletons we can infer a prior existence; but no inference of this nature could be drawn from a ruined building, or a cave of bones, that Cain murdered Abel, that Noah fell into sin, or that Eve, tempted herself, became the tempter of her husband. Here is then a fact, we have what would have been, but for Moses, the ante-historic life of the earth: mere reason could not guess those facts, mere tradition could not be safely relied on, and therefore, either Moses was divinely inspired with a knowledge of these facts, or he was an impostor. But there is not an atheist in existence who pretends to the least deference to reason, to evidence, or truth, who will affirm that Moses was an impostor; and there is no delirious rodomontading romanticist of the German school who will boldly affirm that Moses wilfully deceived posterity, after having more miraculously succeeded in deluding his own age, which he must have done if not inspired.

The Old Testament also contains a great quantity of predictive matter, some relative to the Jews and other to the circumjacent nations; some of the prophecies describe nations almost before they were in existence; others describe the most *improbable* events, the name of Cyrus before his birth, the means by which Babylon would fall, the order, with the descriptive emblems, of the four great

monarchies, the captivity of the Jews a long period before it was probable, and their return, the birth of Jesus from a virgin mother, and the principle events of his life and death, many centuries before he was born. Now either these prophecies were Inspired, or they were fables, or were not written till after the events had transpired. To the last supposition we reply, near three hundred years before the birth of Christ these prophecies were in the possession of the Alexandrine Jews and Greeks, and a copy was to be found in the famous Ptolomean Library: that they were not fables is shown by the exact fulfilment of the prophecies; have the fables of Æsop or Phædrus ever been fulfilled? There is therefore but one solution of the fact that the Old Testament is filled with predictive matter which subsequent history has verified, and that is, that "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of men, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Divine Spirit." Escape from this is impossible, except into the absurdity that reason in those darker and ruder ages was prescient of the future, though it has ceased to be so since.

But there is yet another link in this galling chain for the opponents of Inspiration to break or melt as they are best able. The Old Testament contains a quantity of matter that is purely supernatural, and altogether beyond the region of reason. Many of the antagonists to the Inspiration of the Old Testament profess to regard it as a true history, admit that the writers were sincere, and confess that the documents are authentic, but still deny them to be inspired, and that, abating the prophecies, the unaided human intellect was competent to the production of the rest. We demand then from these discriminating and candid persons how they explain the scattered facts in the Old Testament that are purely supernatural. How could reason attain to the knowledge of the sentiment in that remarkable utterance of Jehovah, "Let us make man in our image, and in our likeness, and let them have dominion," etc., or that sadder sentiment, "Behold the man is become as one of us?" By what art could reason,

come to know that Jehovah ever said, "I know Abraham that he will command his household after him;" or that God foretold the enslaving of the Hebrews in Egypt, and the period and the means by which it should terminate? How did the reason of Joseph enable him to decypher the symbolic warnings of Pharaoh's dreams, or Daniel those of Nebuchadnezzar? Let these reason-worshippers explain how the author of the book of Job came to know what transpired in the spiritual world illustrative of the policy of Satan in attacking Job, and the wisdom of God in permitting it? Who explained to reason the feelings that are attributed to Jehovah at the prospect of the deluge? How came the reason of Samuel with the pre-science to know that Saul was the king elect of Judah; or Elisha with the knowledge of Gehazi, though he had not followed the hypocrite and miser in quest of Naaman? You perceive we only select a few of the many records of supernatural matter to be found in the Old Testament. Either these things occurred, or they did not. If they did not, the book is an imposture; but if they did occur, which we verily believe, how did reason come to know them? Can reason read the bosom of Deity, or instantaneously know what is passing at a distance, or search the human heart, or gaze into the supernatural world, or interpret dreams, or expound the designs of Deity? Happily for it and for us all, the supernatural region is closed to sense and reason except in as far as God condescends to reveal it.

Still another link in this fearful chain of facts must be examined. Hitherto you have observed we have been silent on the miracles recorded in the Old Testament. Are these forgeries or facts? If facts, did man work the miracles himself? and if not, why were they wrought but to accredit the messengers of heaven to mankind, and to give authority to the agents so commissioned to do their work? And who were these agents, the workers of these miracles? Moses, the writer of the first five books of the bible; Joshua, the writer of his time; Samuel, the writer of his day; Elijah and Elisha, the writers of theirs; and

Isaiah and Jeremy, the writers of theirs. Here then is Moses delivering the law, Samuel and other prophets recording the intermediate history of their nation, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, while composing the principal prophecies, all empowered to work miracles. Grant that they only wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and the miracles become their indorsement by heaven, to their own and the generations following. Suppose they merely wrote their own opinions, perhaps often errors, and you have Jehovah arming these men with power to deceive the human race for ever, to baffle himself, to mystify his nature, to libel his actions, to cast the anxious thoughts of guilt and fear into deeper foreboding; and while thus arming the writers of the Old Testament with the credentialization which miracles alone give, refusing to send to his fallen human family a certain light to reconduct them from their perils to the bosom of their father again. Miracles and Inspiration are but two sides of one idea; for he that is clothed with the former power is, by the force of instinctive logic, authorized to speak in the name of God.

Long as you have been kept from the main subject of this address, you must be patient to make good the ground before you begin the great edifice of faith, and I now ask your attention to the fact that many of the writers of the Old Testament expressly affirm they were commanded by Jehovah to deliver to writing what they had divinely received. Moses and Joshua declare that they received the mandate to write in a book; and some of the intermediate prophets were bidden to enter the acts of men and God in a written record, and to "lay it up before the Lord;" while the later prophets preface their enunciations with "Thus saith the Lord," to "write the scroll within and without," that the verities of old time might not perish with the sinners or the faithful whose wants had evoked the oracles of God. Now these writers were good men, as their lives prove, and would not pretend to have a divine commission to write if they had not. They have written and preserved both ante-historic, predictive, and

supernatural matters, as well as doctrine, and mere ordinary narratives; and they did work miracles; and the inference is irresistible, that what they wrote is the will of God for the behoof of a world that never in its highest state could by reason alone find out God, nay, which has never yet discovered the best form of civil government, or of education, or of preventing poverty, and wars, and crimes.

A still stronger plea in behalf of the Inspiration of the Old Testament is found in the unique and miraculous homogeneity of the twenty-nine writers of the various books. This is, to my mind, the most remarkable evidence of all. Select any twenty-nine writers from any nation, of any age, on any subject, and say if you can produce an analogous instance of agreement. Does Macaulay, the last historian of England, agree with Hume? or do either of them agree with the older authors? Does Byron agree with Shakespeare, or Addison with Pope, or Dryden with Crabbe, or Dugald Stewart with Locke, or Lyels with Mantell, or Paley with Baxter, or Adam Smith with Porter or Malthus? All the world knows their animosities and differences—wide as the poles asunder; yet they are all Englishmen, all proud of their nation, all loved the same hills and rivers and sea; the same flowers in spring, and in autumn the same harvest scenes, gladdened their hearts. It is impossible to find twenty-nine authors agreeing on the same subject, even when they are contemporaries. But the writers of the Old Testament were scattered over a period of fifteen hundred years; some were poets, others shepherds; some had the highest education, and others little or none; some were wealthy and powerful, and others poor and obscure. They were also of different temperaments,—the ardent, the melancholic, the deeply reflective, the man of terse thought, and the more expanded delineator of what he felt or saw or heard. Some were biographers, others compilers of narratives; some wrote poems, others consolations; some reasoned, and others burst into anathema, or glowed with prospective visions. And in spite of all this disparity of time, education, employment, temperament, and outward

condition, you find only from Moses to Malachi a consistent elaboration of the same moral ideas. Collusion was impossible; accidental agreement, judged from the doctrine of probability alone, would be a miracle; and the only legitimate result of this view is, that while each writer was left to his modes of utterance, and his vernacular and constitutional idiom, all were under the inspiration of one Divine presiding Spirit, that "ministered to every one as he would." As the sparkling and vital blood flows through a hundred different channels, straight or tortuous, equally filling the great arterial veins, and the almost imperceptible vesicles of the body; or as the glittering stream of metal rushes through all the windings of the mould,—curving, embossing, or rounding, as the mould requires,—so did the Spirit of God pour out its divine treasure into the moulded souls of men, and alas for generations that have unthankfully despised the boon, or in the proud scorn of their reason, that neither could remove a wrinkle from the brow, nor a pain from the tooth, have scoffed at this gorgeous work of Revelation, and affect to call it a myth, a phantom, or a lie!

Such then, are the grounds on which I receive the Inspiration of the Old Testament, apart from its connexion with the New; considered antecedently to its development into history. And those grounds, if Jesus had never spoken on the question at all, or if his disciples had never quoted from the Old Testament, and referred to it as a pre-existing Revelation from heaven, are sufficient to warrant our faith. You see now, perhaps, the importance of so long waiving the testimony of Jesus to the question. Prior to his appearance the book was received by the Jewish church as an Inspired document. There must have been solid grounds for the Old Testament being so received, altogether apart from the New writers; and those which I have now laid before you, were some of the reasons for which most of the greatest and best men of the ante-christian era admitted that the law and the prophets "came not of old time by the will of man."

When, however, we add to all these urgent considera-

tions, the fact, that the Old Testament is quoted or referred to in the New, more than five hundred times, either by Christ or his apostles, and always as to an absolute authority;—that Jesus said, “I come not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil;”—that though he accused the priesthood and the pharisaic scribes of every other fault, he never charged them with corrupting the Old Testament;—that he appeals to it as his warrant to act and to teach, and for the truth and the place of his appearance;—that he urged both the Jews and his disciples to “search the Scriptures;”—and that he always upheld the authority of Moses, though at first sight his object might seem so different to that of Jesus;—it is clear that the Old Testament was Inspired, and Jesus regarded it as such. In this case, if the Old Testament of that day were what we have now, it is evident that Jesus Christ indorsed it with his great authority, and taught the Jews and Gentiles who believed in him, to accept the Old Testament as the revealed will of God. If the Old Testament was not inspired, it is still evident that our Lord believed it to be so, for such a book only can be of Divine authority; then either Jesus knew that it was not an infallible document, and yet pretended it was, or he did not know that it was not Inspired. On the hypothesis that the Old Testament was not Inspired, as Jesus Christ taught that it was, he either deceived others, or must have been himself deceived. First then let us examine the proposition that he was deceived,—monstrous and irreverent I know it seems, but when we argue with the imbecile, the obstinate, or the ignorant, we must yield them a little, that we may win the more magnanimous a victory. How then was Christ deceived? From deficiency of judgment to investigate the question? Will the author of the sermon on the mount, of the many charming parables in which divine truth was couched, of solutions of various casuistic difficulties, and of the most extraordinary development of moral truth to which human ears were ever summoned, be then averred to have been deceived from lack of intellectual faculty? Could Jesus Christ have been deceived in his judgment of the Old Testament on

account of defective opportunities of investigating the subject? Lies often coil under fine simple words, as adders do under a group of flowers. What are these pretended facilities furnished by modern science, and the growth of time? The various considerations that we have addressed to you illustrative of the Inspiration of the Old Testament are very obvious, and would occur to the mind of any honest and ordinary Jew, and these and infinitely more cogent reasons must have presented themselves to that of Jesus Christ. Truth does *not* live in a well, but her throne is in the sunlight, and ever accessible to mortals; and as truth always keeps the way to herself open to earnest and conscientious students, Christ could not have erred from lack of opportunities of investigating the Inspiration of the Old Testament. But some might affirm, since they regard Jesus merely as a man, that the ordinary human prejudices, not to say occasional perversity of feelings would mislead him. Strange indeed, if they did; for can the bitterest opponent of the doctrine of Inspiration point to any other instance in the teaching or conduct of Jesus in which he was clearly under the sway of prejudice. The prejudices of men are always strongest on those questions about which they are most concerned. Did Christ show any prejudice for wealth, or power, or fame, or personal enjoyment, or for his family, for the priesthood, or for the lower ranks, or any class of living or dead men? What in us is prejudice, in him was pre-judgment, for there is not a single instance of his recorded life in which he discovered a weakness of thought, a tendency to over-color, or to undervalue his opponents, nor has he uttered a sentence which time, experience, and history, have not verified. Jesus Christ, therefore, could not have been deceived on the Inspiration of the Old Testament; and you perceive we have altogether waived the bearing of his miracles on this point.

It therefore follows if the Old Testament were not the Inspired book of God, that Christ must have known that it was not; and yet by treating the book in so many ways as the Divine law from which there is no appeal, he

deceived both his followers and the Jews. Let us see then how this quadrates with facts. Germany, France, England, and America, have produced men who do not blush to confess, that Christ may not have humoured the prejudices of his nation, and yet have deceived his disciples by not declaring his real opinions of the Old Testament. Is there, then, any other instance in his life in which he deceived? Did he beguile his disciples to his cause by seductive promises of pleasure, power, and profit? or did he flatter the Jews with a brilliant prospective of their national destiny? Nay, did he even flatter his own relatives or himself, with visions of prosperous re-action in the opinions of the public? The evangelic records crush these questions with two letters, an indignant No! But on the supposition that Christ deceived the world in the matter of the Old Testament, how are we to explain his miracles, and the prodigies of his birth and youth, or of his death, omitting for the present the smothering reply of his resurrection. Nicodemus in his stealthy interview with Christ, gave utterance to the heart of all mankind when he said, "No man can do the miracles that thou doest except God be with him." We all own that if there be miracles, God must be their ultimate author: at all events that the wisest uninspired men could not work miracles. But Christ did work miracles; many whose history is not transmitted, and some of which there is the well-attested record. The dead were raised, the blind leapt into instantaneous vision, deafness vanished, paralysis and idiocy were removed, cases of dropsy, dysentery, and cripples were also suddenly healed. These were all produced without effort or delay, by the word of Jesus alone. Yet we are to suppose that Jesus was a deceiver all the while, and preached a doctrine of the Inspiration of the Old Testament that was not a fact. Here then is God indorsing a deceiver, to deceive not only his own age and nation, but the world and all times. This is the irresistible conclusion; or we must maintain that Jesus, the supposed deceiver, wrought miracles though but a mortal, independant of the Divine Being himself.

One's heart sickens at the revolting trash that scepticism calls upon us to examine and refute; but as the philanthropist must encounter the penury, the disease, the sorrow, or the guilt that he would remove, so the preacher must analyze the dunghill, or investigate the sewer, to convince the unreasonable, the prejudiced, or the perverse, that the lost jewels are not there.

Important, however, as the testimony of Christ to the Inspired authority of the Old Testament is, considered as the highest authority of the purest reason, and of perfect virtue, it is manifest that this testimony would only be valuable in proportion to the antecedently-proved Inspiration of that book. No mere declaration, even from Christ himself, could make an ordinary volume an inspired one; though, being inspired, the corroboration from Jesus is of the utmost magnitude. If Christ had declared the Old Testament to be Inspired, if it were not known to be so, he would only have damaged the book by elevating it to a rank which its intrinsic merits could not maintain. And he would equally have damaged his own cause, by furnishing his enemies with a proof of his erroneous judgment, and his disciples with an excuse to doubt his power and goodness, since they could not trust his wisdom. All this is an additional proof of the soundness of the course of argument pursued in this address, making the Inspiration of the Old Testament to stand on its own merits, antecedent to the authority of Jesus or of his apostles.

In defiance, however, of this array of irrefutable evidence in favor of the divine authority of the Old Testament drawn from the book itself, and of the vast augmentation of the proof from the testimony of Christ himself, we shall be told the subject is not sufficiently proved. We are challenged, How were the writers of the Old Testament inspired?—were they always so when they wrote?—and were these writers equally inspired? Aye indeed, I know full well that these are the bushes in which the game of scepticism conceals. We are not, however, without defence even here. Those who favor me with their presence as general auditors, best know whether they ever hear

anything from this place to discourage the application of sound philosophy to religious matters. No; I am thankful to remember that I was always taught to investigate boldly and fully everything to which philosophical principles will apply. But philosophy is limited to what is really within the province of reason, and to what God has revealed. Yet philosophy ponders in vain on a thousand subjects within the range of reason, and knows nothing. She has multiplied her apparatus, her plans, her library, her furnaces, her tests, and her telescopes; but has she ever discovered where is the seat of the thinking power in man, or how thought is concocted in the cells of the brain, or how sounds in the ear become sentiments in the soul, or in what way memory recalls the past, or imagination visions the future, or how thoughts are chained together, and moral feelings respectively follow in their train? Go into the library, and reach down the volumes of the choicest sons of philosophy, and examine their results on these and innumerable other subjects. In all these matters philosophy has utterly failed. It does not know how one human spirit acts on another, nor can it ever know. If, then, we do not know how one created mind acts on another, how can we pretend to master the modes by which the Infinite Spirit acts on men? The question is, in our judgment, *altogether extra-rational*; and there is very little less folly evinced by the scholastics who profess to philosophize on the *modus operandi* of Inspiration, than in those smart but fantastic schoolmen of the middle ages who disputed how many spirits could go at once through the eye of a needle, or whether a spirit could pass from one place to another without passing through the intermediate space. We smile at the logical erudition that for nearly two centuries thus misemployed the acutest wits of Christendom; and if we do not smile, we no less pity the inane subtlety that waives the glorious advantages of the Book of Revelation till it has satisfied itself on all the petty quibbles that a Didymean form of faith propounds. Scepticism has always preferred the Socratic doubts to the positive doctrine of the more gorgeous and profound Plato.

All worthy and rational doubts, the Book of Revelation, or reason as its counsel, will answer; but the Spirit of God has always pursued the course with frivolous interrogatives that Jesus did with Pilate, the priests, and Herod, to whose paltry enquiries he "answered never a word." Distinctions in the quantity and the mode of Inspiration there doubtless were; but who is to explain them, since it is probable that neither the prophets nor the apostles could have done it if they would, nor would have explained them if they might. The once-living men who were the only witnesses of the mode in which the Divine Spirit affected them have left the earth, and no explanations on this subject can ever rise beyond conjecture. Nor is there a defect in the benignity of God, that this topic has never been explained. What can it benefit us to know whether the judgment of one was elevated, while the imagination of another was preternaturally excited? Would it make me more wise or happy if I knew which of the sacred writers only enjoyed suggestive aid, and which received the message in *totidem verbis*, or by vision, or by dream?—whether the visits of the Divine Spirit were long or short,—whether attended with visible symbols,—whether the impulse were given to the soul through the senses, or directly to the judgment,—whether, and in what degree, the Inspired men were subject to force, or how their liberty was consonant with divine control?—with a host of other queries, which may be debated, but can never be solved; and if solved, it would only be to give place to a still more inquisitive brood of even more pugnacious dubitations. I am not afraid of enquiry, nor averse to it, even into the deep things of God; but I waive questions that can never be determined. All the evidence I could reasonably desire is supplied in the miracles, the prophecies, and the supernatural and substantial truths taught; in the holy lives of the writers; in the absence of all motives of secular interest; in the continent life in Christ of all that believe; in the remarkable concurrence of Jewish and Pagan records; and in the wonderful adaptation of the Gospel to all the moral wants

of man. And "if ye believe not these, neither would ye be persuaded though one rose from the dead," or though all the metaphysical and psychologic queries of the present age respecting Inspiration were solved. It is enough for me to know that neither a race of fools nor of wise men could have produced the Old Testament, and a race of knaves would not.

But we are taunted with the alleged discrepancies in the volume of the Old Testament,—with the various readings,—with the defects of its good men,—with the supposed contradictions of the Bible to modern science,—with chronologic difficulties,—with fragments disjointed,—with acts of seeming severity at one time, and at another of apparent lax morality in the conduct of Jehovah himself. Our reply is, God gave an ample and a well-attested Revelation to man, and left to him the duty of understanding and preserving it. Preserved it indeed we have; but how? Not as if it had been the most priceless jewel that human fingers could hold, but as if it were too common to be deeply studied, but yet, perhaps, of too much value to be lost. The documents were often copied, and often translated; but neither copies nor translations were without trivial errors. At length the Jews were dispersed; the Hebrew underwent neglect, and the dolorous reign of the papacy threw all learning into the hands of those ecclesiastic Goths and Vandals, the priesthood, who chaunted instead of studying, and absorbed their life in pontific pomp and voluptuousness, instead of promoting the knowledge of God's word. Meanwhile Jewish learning was almost confined to its persecuted Rabbis, some of whom, in multiplying copies of their Scriptures, often inserted a gloss or a criticism into the text, or mistook a number, or misread a line, or mistranslated a name, or expleted an allusion. From these sources chiefly arose many of the various readings which, since printing has brought criticism into action, supply the remedy to correct the evil. And we boldly affirm that when criticism has examined more carefully all the ancient copies, *πνευματικά συγκρίνοντες*, there will be found no discrepancy

in the Old Testament worthy the name. And when our Delabordes have made actual survey of the geographic localities, and our Champollions have finished their hieroglyphic researches, and our geologists quit their balloons and cease to be rhapsodists, and our Hales have fully investigated the chronology of the Syriac and Egyptian eras, and our Niebuhrs and Burckhardts have revised and extended their travels; when our men of physical science have passed from its portals to its arcana, and our Neaders and Kays have consummated their labors in philosophical history; when our Blomfields, Boothroyds, and Kennicots have made the idiomatic laws of the sacred tongues more familiar to our colleges and pulpits, and the wild and presumptuous genius of German rationalism has again given place to sound and manly sense; when the light troops of feeble sentimentalizers are driven from the pulpit, and the more thoughtful students and fervent believers of God's simple and well-authenticated word return,—the Infidel will lose his scorn and flippancy, and the Christian his fear, when the Inspiration of either the Old or the New Testament is debated.

This audience, however, possibly contains some who affect to be ready to admit the Inspirability of the distinctively prophetic parts of the Old Testament, and of such as were written by persons who wrought miracles in proof of their claim to be considered Inspired authors, but object to those books which are purely historic, or which contain a less portion of moral teaching, or of which the authorship is now obscure. Such persons enquire, Are we to admit that these books—Ezra and the Chronicles, to wit—are a genuine part of the revelation from God? In our opinion, Yes, certainly, and for the following reasons. It is affirmed in the text at the head of this address, that "All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable," etc., or, as I read the *πᾶσα γραφὴ*, "every writing" is given by Divine Inspiration; and, whether for want of more light, more spirituality, or more faith, we fail to see it, it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Let us sup-

pose, however, that like the daring and trenchant Semler, we cut out these books from the Inspired volume; we then find ourselves repudiating books that formed part of the Old Testament in the times of Christ, and from which he and his apostles quoted, and to which they referred. Once commit yourself to the rule of receiving no book as divine whose author was not a prophet or a worker of miracles, and you multiply instead of diminishing your difficulties. You have then to draw the line, and to reconcile yourself to the fact that these books are quoted indiscriminately in the New Testament with the works of Moses and Isaiah; and, above all, to be assured that the books to which you object were *not* written by prophetic or by miracle-working authors, none of which will mortal ever be able to do. Many were the miracles wrought in the time of Christ, and prophecies probably uttered, that were never committed to writing, though they accomplished important temporary purposes; and it is highly probable that the same things occurred in the Old Testament period also. Besides this, if you adopt the rule of admitting no book except written by a thaumaturgist or a prophet, how are you to enforce its obedience? Your neighbour may repudiate your rule, and invent one of his own; and instead of rejecting three or four of the lesser historic books, he may reject a dozen, and thus produce infinitely more difficulties on the question of Inspiration than confessedly exist now.

There is, moreover, an apparent arrogance of intellect, scarcely compatible with the humility that is an universal characteristic of a good man, in any one undertaking to affirm that in the lesser books of the Old Testament there is a want of moral utility, and an absence of divine teaching. This will not appear an unimportant consideration if we remember to what startling and beautiful uses in the Christian system our Lord and his apostles applied some of the passages of the Old Testament which to men had long seemed common-place. The book of God is a peculiar composition, finely expressed by the heathen poet's choice description of the sun,—*alius et idem*. This

Bible is ever developing new significance, and opening up new stores of knowledge; and while the works of men have a fixed and a limited sense, and decay when the age has communized their ideas, the Word of God keeps pace with all the developements of the race, and is ever a-head of its foremost lights,—thus proving its divine origin. To say, therefore, what the Scriptures, or any parts of them, do not contain, is to arrogate more than mortal knowledge, which can never be conformable to the Christian idea of a good man. And to affirm that in a purer and a higher age, when the church has become more receptive, heaven more transparent, and earth more vivid, and the forms of nature and the facts of providence are more developable of divine teaching, that even the Song of Solomon, and the rustic leaves of Ruth, and the impassioned and eventful pages of Esther, will not discover some richer uses than have yet been found, though long concealed,—to affirm that this will not be, is more than modest intellect will hazard. Recent discoveries have given new value to some parts of the Scriptures, and from every future discovery in art, science, or letters, the book of Revelation is destined to receive further value; and I am meanwhile disposed as the prophets, to “search what, and what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ that was in them did signify.”

It may have been expected by some that we should have pursued a different course in this argument,—that we should have conformed ourselves to the technical order into which wordy theologians have cast this controversy. We have avoided this plan intentionally, for we have always found these technical forms and terms of controversy, though valuable as concentrated modes of speech, snares to the combatants and perplexing to the hearers. We have been content to claim for the Old Testament, as a whole, the authority of plenary Inspiration, and not to arrogate to ourselves the competence to discriminate whether the words were Inspired, as well as the thoughts, or by what different degrees the Spirit of God acted on the sacred poet, the moralist, the miracle-worker, the prophet.

or the biographer. Some needed both words and things,—some, perhaps, only a knowledge of the subject; but all required guidance, control, and supervision, and this we are persuaded all received, although we neither know how the power was obtained or how felt.

Let it not be imagined, however, that we consider ourselves to have said all that could be easily adduced in favor of the Inspiration of the Old Testament. Many subjects press for introduction, and some not less cogent than those to which your attention has been invited: but this is not a reading age, nor a lover of long pulpitie exposition. It will read volumes of novels of the rudest trash produced by men with a name of infamy or without one at all, and the age sighs at the end of the third or fourth volume with bitterness that the story has been so short,—the adulteries, the murders, the tricks of art, the love matches, the surprizes, the tragedies, and the follies so few and so brief. But the age that gloats on the long books of the romanticist, is weary to read a moral treatise, if it be written in a bulkier volume than a tract. Farewell for ever to the large-statured tomes of Charnock, Howe, and Manton; when thousands hung with rapture on the lips of that verbose but beautiful modern Chrysostom, Jeremy Taylor, or read with delight the lofty treatises of Ainsworth, Lawson, or Rutherford. But as all teachers must respect the temper of their pupils, so we, not to exceed the tractate measure, would waive the rest, and leave to other opportunities what we might have said on the peculiar aspect of the controversy in the present age—different from that of all preceding ones, and most different from those early times in which this controversy was rather a branch of the question of miracles and prophecy than a separate topic of debate; for even the learned pagans themselves saw that if the miracles were true and the prophecies were verified, the Inspiration of their authors was an unquestionable inference.

A very powerful argument in favor of the writers of the Old Testament is also to be drawn from the fact of their having written at all, as well as from the style of the

writing itself, compared with other productions of a later and a more polished age by the same people. In reference to the former subject, we may remind you that this is a writing age, and every tenth man now must needs be a scribe; but the *cacoethes scribendi* was never the disease of the Jewish nation, and least of all in those earlier times. The Jews cared nothing for the lucubrations of the Athenian schools, or for the theories of Rome and Egypt. They considered themselves the people of God, with a divine law, guaranteed by a prophetic lineage, and the Gentiles were without. What mattered it to them what Diodorus thought of the ethnology of nations, or the feats of Jupiter, or the arts of Melanthus or Euxphranor, Protogenes or Artemon? The Hebrew race had no interest in the forms of Gentile government,—theirs was divine; or in the origin of matter and of evil as expounded by the scholastics of Alexandria and Lacedemon, for Moses had definitely explained all. And as to the fables of their poets of Paphian bowers and Tartarean caves, what cared the sons of Abraham for these dreamings? They had a land flowing with milk and honey, and looked forth from this world to a New Jerusalem above, where, in the bosom of the blessed, all the hallowed descendants of Isaac and Jacob would for ever repose. This indifference of the Hebrews to the Gentile speculations, added to the exclusiveness of the Mosaic system, would all contribute, not to multiply writers, but to make their appearance improbable. Why should they write books, since the nation were all believers in Moses, and knew his law by rote, and sang the Psalms daily, and learned the holy narratives as school lessons? Every Jew taught his son, and every daughter of Sarah the future wife and mother of her race. Why then should they write thus, and preserve a continuant inheritance of sacred deeds and literature, if they had not been propelled to it by a Divine stimulus, providing for the future wants of the world, when the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles should have been broken down.

That there did exist, seven hundred years before the

coming of Christ, among the Hebrew people, genuine divine records, true prophets, and a well-established code of divine law, is also evident from the notices that the Old Testament contains of pretenders to the prophetic office, and to miraculous powers, and who assumed the "rough garments" in which in old time the prophets of God had been want to clothe. An imitation of anything, infallibly establishes the pre-existence of originals, whether it be a book, a picture, or a coin: and the frequent appearance, from the days of Joshua to the time of Malachi, of "sons of Belial," who thus lay in wait to deceive, who aimed at power, or emolument, or fame, through spurious oracles, or pretended dreams and foresights, establishes the fact beyond all doubt that the copyists could not have existed, if the originals had not been widely known.

If, however, after all that has been said or suggested, your faith still feels fearful or is troubled by doubts, show your courage, your conscientiousness, and your wisdom in the treatment of your fears. To conclude outright that because you do not yet see all your obstacles to the admission of the Inspired authority of the Old Testament removed, or because we have failed to adapt the remedy for your idiosyncratic type, that therefore the case is hopeless, and that you must forsooth betake yourself to the sceptic's city of Nod, and dwell apart, in open estrangement from your God and from your brethren in patience and tribulation, would be no such candor as it might seem; but the irrational franticness of the wrecked mariner, who, having several sound spars and buoys within his reach, yet because they are not all that he desires, plunges at once beneath the waves. So has many an impotent doubter ended his fears, and found certainty indeed! The foregoing views are satisfactory to our judgment, and to that of many others; but as arguments partake of that mystic peculiarity that applies to food and medicine and taste, that what is beautiful and appropriate and successful with one, fails with another, it may be, after all our care and your patience, that you are still unbefitted by the corks we have thrown out to help

you. Still, however, have faith in God, in truth, and in time, and in the growing power of your own faith and judgment, and nothing shall by any means harm you. God cannot deceive you: truth will justify all her children: time is ever working up from its old wealthy ocean caves fresh stores of evidence. True faith is never lost by shipwreck; and Christian experience, that is the work of God, will lead you by a way that you know not, to the peace that passeth all understanding. Beware of the fallacies of scepticism, and remember that they are, for the most part, the work of the enemy; and while we would have you beware also of the fallacies of the weak, the unskilful, the sophistical, the thoughtless, or the rash abettors of the doctrine of Inspiration, that their voice is in the main, that of friendship, and honesty, and truth. In argument, as in the christian life, we "know no man after the flesh," and homage no other name under heaven than that of truth and Christ, who is the truth incarnate; and there remains nothing for us, in "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," but to wrestle with flesh and blood, and with principalities and powers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places, till we have won the fight. It is not unkindness in our God to leave some difficulties to task our powers, to quicken our growth and to promote our life; and they who have studied God's ways most deeply, and loved him with the utmost ardor, and who have come to repose in him after years of doubt and resistance, have always owned that it was his sovereign and highest wisdom in not revealing too much, and so revealing all as to compel us to exertion; and thus our experience tallies with the writ of old times, that "it is the wisdom of God to conceal" some matters.



SECOND LECTURE.

"IF THE APOSTLES WERE NOT INSPIRED, JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT A TRUE PROPHET, AND THE APOSTLES WERE DECEIVERS."

"All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."—2. Tim. iii, 16.

Inspiration is the divine possession of supernatural knowledge by man, whether relating to objects purely above human reason, to future events, or to those occurrences which transpired before man's existence; together with the power accurately to convey this threefold knowledge, or indeed any other, orally or by writing to mankind, and to perform authoritative acts in the name of God. This Inspiration was possessed by the apostles, in pursuance of the promise of Christ; and we have met this evening to show that the apostles were so Inspired, that they professed to be so, and that their Inspiration accorded in every particular with the promises of Jesus; and to urge the alternative, that if the apostles were not Inspired, they were deceivers, and Christ himself was not a true prophet.

It will, however, form no part of our plan to attempt to determine precisely when, or how, the apostles became thus Inspired; whether the divine influence abode with them in the same degree continually, or only entered at such periods as their labors in the cause of Christ made

their infallible guidance necessary; whether one of the apostles shared a larger measure of this supernatural endowment than others, or if the same person always possessed the same degree of celestial aid; whether their bodily senses, during the visitation of the afflatus, were abeyant or active, or their imagination, their judgment, or their will were the principal agent? If the express words were given, and whether in every case; or whether the apostles could explain the mode in which they were affected by the Divine Spirit, or were sensible of any restraint on their mental liberty; whether God imparted more by vision than by dream, or in what ratio these "holy men of God," who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," received their messages from angels, or supernatural voices, or by the usual courses of reason? Whether the apostles possessed *criteria* to judge when the Spirit spake within them, or when their own feelings only prompted them to utterance or to action; whether they were enfeebled after their labors, as men usually are; or how they came to know that the selection they made from what they knew was accordant with the divine will; or that their vast inferences from the words and acts of Christ were acceptable to God?

These queries carry with them a seductive appearance of scrupulous regard to certainty. We admit them to be shrewd, and to cover a large space of enquiry; but they have been often proposed, and many a theologian has tried his mettle by them all, as many a sceptic has chosen to pitch the battle against Christianity among these metaphysical bushes. Desiderable, however, as a satisfactory reply to these enquiries may appear, I regard them nearly all as unanswerable; not that we are left without a sufficient evidence that God, "who spake unto the fathers by the prophets," has also spoken unto us by the apostles. All that I mean by this seeming concession is, that these queries are not legitimate, and, if answered, would not prevent other dialectic troublers from asking as many more; while the effect of carrying the evidence for Inspiration thus into the region of metaphysics would be,

to take the question off the grand bases of miracles, prophecy, supernatural knowledge, and the holy lives and transcendent power, prudence, and courage of the founders of Christianity, and remove it to a foundation that not one of a hundred would be able to understand. God knew the average capability of the human intellect throughout the race better than we do, and what proof most became him to vouchsafe, and which kind of proof is most powerful to produce and sustain faith, and therefore most to our interest to possess. And with all this foreknowledge of men, it is a remarkable fact that God has *not* inclined the apostles to leave replies in their records to the foregoing and similar questions. Waiving this consideration, a glance at the writings of the evangelists, and of Paul, Peter, James, and Jude, will convince us that we may look in vain to their pages for any solution to this fastidious inquisitiveness. And as no one but the apostles could reply to these interrogations, and they have left the earth without doing so, it remains as an inevitable inference that these queries never can be solved; for you perceive that they are partly historic, and partly exceed the limits of reason, and apply to subjects on which we possess no analogies to guide us. We have no alternative, then, but diligently to investigate the history and writings of the apostles, to extract from them the best evidence in our power that they were the Inspired expositors of the will of God, and ambassadors for Christ, and to show all reasonable objectors to the theory of the Gospel, and all conscientious and candid doubters on the point of Inspiration, that if the evangelic books do not yield all that our fear, our pride, our ignorance, or our weakness might have desired, they are redundant in that class of proofs—*facts*, corroborated by Gentile and Jewish history, miracles, prophecy; a perfect theory of morals, sweetly simple but profoundly universal; a body of supernatural doctrine; a spiritual life in the apostles themselves fully answerable to their own doctrines; a divine bearing in unparalleled sufferings, never attained before or since; an insight into human character, such as the most adept philosophists

never exhibited; and a miraculous moral harmony of speech and action among twelve men of different temperaments, who were early separated and had no formal compact of agreement. These, then, are the proofs we present to you of the Inspiration of the apostles, instead of offering you a metaphysical analysis of modes, or a startling theory of emotions, or a number of plausible theories dressed up in the habiliments and forms that fascinate scientific smatterers; and we leave it to your judgment whether to take what we can give, and what has ever satisfied men not less learned, and who have doubted much more deeply, than the men of the present age, and who, having long insisted, like Thomas, on the production of unreasonable evidence, came at last, like him, to be smothered with the shame of their unbelief, and to exclaim, in the language of conquered reason, "My Lord and my God!" or else to venture your souls on the future in no better a bark than one composed of your frail webs of doubt, even though it glitter with the spangles of imagination.

Do us not the injustice, meanwhile, of concluding from the temper of these observations, that we decline investigation, or that we would beg the victory, or ask you to close one eye while we fascinate the other; or that, under a challenge to discussion, we shirk the difficulty; or that we propose to appeal to your fears, traditions, and prejudices, rather than to your conscience and judgment. Let me, therefore, beg your prefatory consideration of the nature of certainty; for if our views on that subject be not clear, it is vain to pretend to judge either of any proof or probability, or of the kind of evidence that this subject of Inspiration admits. In proportion to the value of every thing, is the importance of its certainty. It matters little to us whether the penny be pure copper or not, because its value is small; but the question, though of the same kind, is of very different importance, whether that wedge of gold for which we are asked to give twelve hundred pounds be pure gold or two-thirds alloy. If a letter come to us, purporting to contain the gift of a

fortune or a pardon for a capital crime, of what immense consequence becomes the authentic signature, the post mark, or anything that corroborates the contents. If we risk our all in a speculation, (which wise men never do,) how much more important is certainty of information, than if we merely risked what we could afford to lose! These rude hints will be enough to show the young thinker the great truth,—As the value of any thing, so the ratio of certainty respecting it. Now no man can have a greater interest than his Religion, for it is the one overwhelming subject of all worlds and all time; and whatever therefore goes to shake or to establish the certainty of that Religion, must, on that account, be of the utmost magnitude.

How, then, do we ascertain that anything is true? If your enquiry respect anything that comes within the perceptive faculties of the individual, the evidence of the five senses, or any number of them, determines the truth and ends all doubt, for every one believes in the evidence of the senses, except the Papist. If you wish to know the truth of any question relating to physical objects, you avail yourself of the best scientific experiments you can command; and all civilized persons place absolute reliance on proof of this nature, because it is only a modification of the evidence of the senses. But if the truth you are enquiring for be of the nature of geometry, you have in the rules of mathematical demonstration the means of arriving at perfect certainty, and that on two grounds; partly because geometric reasoning can be reduced to the evidence of the senses, and partly that it depends on those self-evident truths which need no proof, and in which all agree. But if you enquire concerning the truth of something in history, here you perceive, as we cannot guess or find out by reasoning what occurred before our time, that we must depend on the testimony of others who lived at or near the time and the place of the occurrence, or such as have had the best means of forming a judgment since. Let us suppose, however, that the truth after which you

are enquiring is neither physical, geometric, nor historic, but a moral question; such as, what would be justice to my neighbour, in given circumstances; or, how much out of my income ought to go to religious and charitable uses; or, what is my duty to the government of a country? you feel at once that this is a kind of truth about which the evidence of the senses, or mathematical reasoning, or the testimony of others, will be of little or no avail. These are questions of moral truth which only admit of moral evidence. But if you are seeking the truth of any religious question, you have the evidence of revelation, which, in our judgment, is the highest proof of certainty that we can have; for by its miracles it appeals to our senses, by its prophecies to our reason, and by its supernatural doctrine to our conscience and moral sense. We are met to discuss the doctrine of Apostolic Inspiration, and you perceive, therefore, the sort of proof of which the subject is capable. We cannot, nor could any one, prove this truth by quoting the testimony of others, by the evidence of our senses, by mathematical demonstration, or by scientific experiment; for the subject only admits of two kinds of proof,—that of reason, applied to the facts of history, and the proof derivable from the book of Revelation itself. Keep these important distinctions in mind as we now proceed.

I. To examine what Jesus Christ promised to his disciples on the subject of their Inspiration.

II. To show that the Apostles were so Inspired, and that Christ thus redeemed his promise.

If we were told that God was about to introduce a new Religion for the world, through the agency of men, and would leave it to us to say in what form the proofs of that revelation should be given, it is probable that we should agree to ask, that a visible messenger should come from heaven, and give substantial proof that he had so come; that he should deliver his instructions to a sufficient number of honest and capable men; that he should give them sufficient instructions, and invest them with a divine power to guard us against the defects of their judgment.

and memory; that they should commit to clear writing what they received; and as long as they continued to live and teach, that the same divine influence should abide with them; that they should give adequate proofs that they possessed this divine power; and that their character and veracity should be so well established, as to remove all fears of their collusion or deceiving us. I say these are the conditions we should probably propose, to provide ourselves with solid demonstration that such a religion had come from God to man. Now how very extraordinary it is that this *is* the exact method God has taken! He sends his Son Jesus Christ from heaven, who, by his wonderful perfection of character, by numerous miracles publicly wrought, and by various fulfilled prophecies, proved that he had come from the Father. Jesus chooses twelve disciples early in his public life, keeps them continually with him, gives them opportunity of witnessing his instructions, his life, and his miracles, for three years; and he promised before he left the world, that "not many days hence" they should "be endowed with power from on high;" that this Divine Spirit should guide them into all truth; that he should bring all things to their remembrance; and that this Spirit should abide with them for ever. It is, therefore, now our duty to examine these promises, briefly but separately, and to see what they import.

1. Jesus Christ promised his Disciples the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost. See John xiv, 16, xv, 26, and xvi, 7. Let us now, then, carefully read the three promises thus preserved by John, the disciple who, from his relations to Christ himself, to his mother after his ascension, and from the fact of his outliving all the apostles, may be judged to have had the best means of information. We will, however, beg your attention only to so much of these promises as relates to the subject before us. In John xiv, 17, Christ promised the disciples that they should receive the Spirit of truth, and that this Spirit should indwell them, and remain with them for ever; and in the 26th verse of the same chapter, the Lord Jesus informed the

apostles that this Holy Ghost should teach them all things, and "bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." In chapter xv, verse 26, Jesus promised that this Comforter,—*Paraclete*, or Divine Spirit,—should expound to them more clearly the character of Christ, though they were also told that he would *not* explain his own operations. And in chapter xvi, verse 13, the apostles were told that "when the Spirit of truth came he would guide them into all truth, and that he would show them things to come." Here, then, we have a promise thrice repeated, and not couched in dark and unusual terms, or colored wth oriental imagery, that the apostles should receive an extraordinary teacher from heaven, who, besides bringing all things to their memory, and showing them things to come, was to guide them into all truth. The apostles, at that time, neither seemed to desire such a teacher, nor to feel their want of his aid. Perhaps they were confident of their ability to witness the powers and the life of their master. But they might forget a part, draw wrong conclusions from the rest, and totally misunderstand the future, and the purport of the Christian system. As men, nothing was more certain than that they would err in some part, or become divided in their opinions, or give an undue prominence to a portion, while they neglected others. They might not be conscious of these liabilities to error, and could not have foreknown the part they were to act in the kingdom of Christ. It was, therefore, with the view of providing them for all that future, and guarding them against all errors, that Christ made this promise of the supernatural aid of the Holy Ghost, of which Jesus most significantly said, "*whom the world cannot receive.*"

Before we proceed to notice the second class of our Lord's promises, it will be better to add a few observations here on these promises of Christ, which had the design to make the apostles competent to expound and teach his doctrine to the world. It is obvious to any one that Jesus Christ by making these promises to his disciples of imparting to them the Holy Ghost, did not trust their natural

abilities. In the choice of the twelve, Christ was no doubt influenced by the wisest motives. It was not because that twelve were the only ones that presented themselves as disciples, that they were elected ; nor would they have become his agents at all, if He had not first drawn them by the force of his love. It was easy to him who had such evident sway over the heart, to have elected twelve men of greater intellect, if that were all that was requisite to constitute disciples ; and such a course would seem to have been more natural than to choose twelve of inferior minds, and to render them competent by superhuman illumination. At all events this extraordinary gift to the twelve, implied on the part of Christ non-confidence in their unendowed state. Christ must also have foreseen what would be the consequence of thus elevating his representatives above the mental level of others ; for they would consider themselves, from the consciousness of this divine bestowment of the Paraclete, no longer as ordinary men, while others would also regard them as teachers specially sent by God. If it were not the intention of Jesus thus to elevate his disciples, and convince them of their extra-natural qualification to teach, others would yet regard them as specially prepared to expound the faith, and would receive their teachings as decisive. And if it were not the intention of Christ to raise a body of authoritative teachers, he yet took the direct course to this end, and thus must have defeated himself ; and if such were not his object why did he thus promise to endow the twelve at all ? I forbear in this place to urge the promises of Christ to bestow the Divine Spirit on the disciples as a proof that he considered himself by these acts as asserting his own divinity ; for he gives what no mortal can bestow, and evidently claimed both a command over the resources of the invisible world, and the future ; and either the promise of Christ was made with full consciousness of his having the power to fulfil it, or he must have arrogated a power which he did not possess, and which could not be in harmony with the universal conceptions of human virtue ; and by preserving the record of these promises of Jesus to the twelve, we have an explanation of the cause that the

Apostles were so immeasurably superior to their former selves in their powers of teaching and action, and in their character, after the memorable day of Pentecost.

Important, however, as it was to qualify the disciples as infallible teachers, Christ did not forget that all men had not the power to discern divine from human instruction, merely by its intrinsic excellence, that the ignorant and the vicious would need to have some outward evidence that the twelve were the accredited messengers of Deity, and even the more enlightened would also require a sign; nor were the apostles themselves without a certain dependance on evidence more tangible and convincing to the senses than any abstract conceptions of truth would afford. To meet these cases Jesus addressed to his disciples a totally different class of promises; for he assured them that they should cast out devils, speak in new languages, take up serpents, and if poison were administered to them it should be harmless; that they should lay hands on the sick, and thus effect their recovery, possess a superiority to all the power of the enemy, and that nothing should harm them; while he taught them that if they were perfect in faith, they would either be able to blast a tree with a word as he had himself done, or to remove a mountain from its site.

We live in a period in which the spirit of hostility to the religion of Christ, if not more daring, is very outspoken; and we are told that miracles were not necessary at all; that no miracle could make that a truth which was not antecedently so; and that if the truth were properly taught, miracles would be superfluous. These things have been often said by the affirmers of the sufficiency of reason, and we admit their plausibility; but like many other plausible things, they are at variance with experience and facts. We intreat your attention, therefore, to this class of our Lord's promises, to bestow miraculous agency on his apostles; and we must put the case very feebly before you if the wisdom and goodness of God are not made to appear in a very singular manner by these promises alone. The advocates of the adequacy of human reason declare, that if the truth of the Gospel were so paramount to all other moral

teaching, that miracles were unnecessary. But let us ask those persons how does it fare even in this enlightened age with the best books, and the most intellectual living teachers, either at the bar, in Parliament, in the Lecture Hall, or in the pulpit? Is it not proverbial, that there is nothing that so surely consigns a book or a living speaker to oblivion, and often to contempt, or at least to a very diminutive class of admirers, as those books or speakers being super-excellent? By some they are stigmatized as dry and heavy, and by others as metaphysical and obscure, while some call them outright irrational. Thus it fares with the Burkes, the Fosters, and the Edwards; while the smart fabricators of bon mots, the flashy tale writers, the scorpion pages of the satyrist, or the incredible frivolities of the adventurer, or the whimsical dogmas of a mesmerician professor run through many editions, are wrought up again into music or dramas, and become the type things of the age. And so would it have fared with the divinely authorized teaching of the apostles, without miracles; for even the pungent appeals of Peter to the Hebrew exiles of Asia Minor, the sweetly simple notes and paternal counsel of John, and the long and learned reasonings of Paul, beginning as they often do from a common earthly fact, and terminating against the gates of Heaven in a gush of glory, would have been despised, if Paul had not shaken the viper from his hand at Melita, if Peter had not been led from prison by a sentinel from the skies, or if John had not escaped harmless from the caldron of Patmos. The world has never yet agreed what is pure reason, nor is it likely to do so soon; for it calls that only rational which flatters its infirmities or connives at its errors, while it has always on hand a stock of damning epithets to apply to every sentiment that goes to the root of the world's moral evils, or that acts as a pedometer to shew how far it has travelled away from truth, from nature, and from God.

In promising to his disciples the gift of miraculous power, our Lord was therefore actuated by consummate wisdom; he saw into the fallacious world of reason in his own age, and foreknew the same world of reason in all

future times. It was compassionate in him to bestow those promises; for it had come to be proverbial of the Jews to "seek a sign," as the indubitable warrant for a divine teacher; and the lower their spiritual life sunk, the more urgent would they grow for those ocular proofs of any doctrine that professed to come from God. But while the Jews were thus gross, the Gentiles of nearly all degrees were not less mentally degraded. Prior to Christianity there existed no such thing on earth as a pure moral teacher, nor was there any generally received code of virtues; still less was there to be found, even in the academic groves, the rudiments of a moral science. From the remnants of Gentile art and literature, we know that the vast majority of every nation was ill-prepared to become an impartial judge on those high questions of moral truth and reason in which Christianity deals; and indeed we may learn how it would have fared with the truth of the Gospel if the apostles had not wrought miracles, from the reception which the noble discourse obtained that Paul addressed to the Athenian philosophers on Mar's Hill, some of whom, though he quoted their own poets, and reasoned on their own principles, considered him a visionary, and others a madman, while the more candid were no further moved by the apostolic communications than to dismiss the speaker with a courteous excuse for their indifference to his doctrine, with "We will hear thee again of this matter." If the messages from Heaven on the resurrection, and unity of the Divine nature, on the necessity for spiritual worship, and for renovation of heart, were thus superciliously dismissed by the eclectic judges of the Areopagus—men proverbially of subtle and deep habits of thought, eloquent in speech, vivid of fancy, erudite, disputative, and well trained as they were to a life of opinionative speculation,—what would have been the effect, excluding for the present the doctrine of Divine influence, of addressing not only the truths explained by Paul at Athens, but the more elevated topics of Christian verity, to the ordinary citizens and their wives, children, and slaves? We can form only inadequate sentiments of the mental state of the world at that period, and have been

foolishly addicted to imagine that nations whose orators were Cicero or Eschines, whose disputants were Seneca and Aristotle, whose men of science were Archimedes and Euclid, and whose poets were Virgil and Pindar, must have been correspondently intellectual. This may appear to be true, but it is not borne out by historic record. The men I have quoted were few, and probably unique instances, and occurred only once in all the long national existences of Greece and Rome. We must judge of the mental thermometer of that period by other phenomena. What say you to a city gorged with slaves,—to a temple, part of which was a brothel,—to a people that could only be amused by flinging the criminals to the lions, or hiring gladiators to spill each other's blood,—to an aristocracy in which the most unnatural crimes were as notorious as their rent-roll,—to a government that was capable of being sold to a political gambler,—or to an age in which every one believed in fate, and banished the art of medicine to the infirm slaves who could neither hew wood nor sculpture stone, nor guide the plough? Such, however, were Greece, Egypt, and Rome. Judge from these facts, of the mental character of the apostolic age among the Gentiles; and you will feel that "gross darkness" must have covered the people, and that miracles alone could have startled the deep-sleeping world. There was also a reason in the apostles themselves, why they should be invested with this celestial energy to work prodigies in corroboration of their character and doctrine. We all know that the clearest minds occasionally fall into moods of doubt and fear, lose their commanding convictions of truth, and become for a time apparently imbecile. From some physical or latent cause the colors may fade from the soul, memory lose her stores, and speech seem to be frozen on the lips from which it was wont to take fire. Something similar to this, the Christian occasionally feels, and hence the value of the "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." Continually engaged in excessive labour, with few comforts, and many privations, it is no reflection either on the goodness of God or the integrity of the apostles, to suppose that they might have felt such

occasional states of torpor ; at all events they were liable to them. But to forestall any interveniency of doubt, however brief, in the apostolic soul, they had, in addition to the witness within, this ocular demonstration ever present with them. Many might lose a part of their confidence occasionally in their own ideas and feelings. The bulky volume of youth soon fades into a diminutive record, and the life of middle age, as decrepitude advances, also dwindle into very small dimensions ; and it rarely happens that both the thoughts of youth and the deeds of manhood are approved by a maturer judgment. What was, then, to assure the minds of the apostles, when their master quitted the world forty years before, and they had become the offscouring of all things, that they had not been deceived ; sincere, but misreaders of the deeds of Providence, and the writ of the prophets ? *Miracles* were the one great cure for all apostolic despondency, for every assault of the devil, or every denial of their authority by false or weak brethren, or for every seeming failure in some of the cities where they had bestowed most labour, and reaped least fruit. They might have spoken rashly, purposed without consideration, or reasoned illogically in earlier life ; but they could never be deceived as to whether they had seen the portentous darkness on Calvary, or the five thousand fed with seven biscuits, or Lazarus raised from the dead ; nor were they less confident that Ananias had fallen in their presence, that the beautiful gate of the temple was more celebrated now than ever from their cure of the cripple, that the father of Publius had been healed with their word, that Dorcas had returned to life, and that Paul and Barnabas, though later called to the fellowship of the apostles, had verified the divinity of their call at Lystra, and Derbe, and Iconium. And thus it appears that whether we regard the mental exigencies of the Jews, the Gentiles, or of the apostles themselves, that the promise of miracles was as necessary as that of the Holy Ghost, the one to guide into all truth, and the other to defend that truth from all the forms of doubt and scepticism, or any other infirmities of human nature.

A third class of our Lord's promises to his disciples,

must, in justice to his wisdom, be also noticed. Every one knows that the success of a teacher depends as much on his prudence, his courage, his tact, his self-possession, his patience, his industry, and his manners, as on the doctrines he delivers, and the mode in which he expounds them; and to the Apostles, the possession of these moral qualities was far more important than they are to ordinary men. Important, however, as this armour of moral attributes was to the twelve, they were of all men most likely to break down if left to their unaided character, on some or other of these particulars. How often have we seen a skilful teacher, who was irresistible in argument, whose paintings of vice and virtue were all to the life, and whose appeal to the feelings was the rush of the whirlwind or the blow of the lightning, prostrating the proud, and softening the obdurate soul; and yet, for want of self command, or tact, or courage, or patience, destroy all his fine workmanship, and bring his great powers into contempt. And who so likely to err from want of decision as Peter, or as Thomas from lack of receptiveness, or as John from a fiery temperament, or as the other son of Zebedee through ambition, or as Matthew from his former secular habits, or as Paul from his impetuosity, or as James from his taciturnity, or indeed all the others from their several besetting infirmities? All this liability to surprise, to fear, to impatience, and to fainting in the work of the Lord, Jesus clearly foresaw; and while he forewarned them of the evils, he promised that though he sent them forth "as sheep among wolves," not a hair of their head should perish. He told the twelve explicitly that their path would be through fire and spears, that his word would act like a refiner's fire, and while it purified the gold would throw off the dross into all the forms of agitated ebullition, yet they should lack nothing; and that though many would think they did God service by destroying them, that they were to return blessing for malediction, and that the mighty spirit of divine peace should ever dwell in their bosom. They were to expect to be brought before magistrates and kings for his name's sake, and yet, though they were neither rich nor

powerful, nor accustomed to address the great, they were still to take no thought beforehand what they should say, or how, "for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh within you." Grand as their train would become as the founders of churches, and the raisers of the dead, the disciples were reminded that the greatest in the kingdom of Christ were the most humble; and that though whatever they bound or loosed on earth, would be recognized in heaven, they were bidden to beware of indolence, lest their hearts should be overcharged even with occasional indulgences. Jesus intimated to them that many an occasion would arise for which he might seem to have given them no previous counsel; but what more could they desire against all emergencies than to be assured, as they were, that "if two of you shall agree to ask anything in my name it shall be done for you by my Father who is in heaven?" In short, for every source of danger to his servants,—moral, intellectual, or external, the Saviour promised them ample remedies; though he neither created them wealth, nor permitted them to use the sword, nor to return evil for evil, nor to do evil to promote good, nor to use their miraculous powers for unlawful or trivial purposes, nor taught them to expect a cessation of the wars of the Lord with the world till it terminated their lives by violence and reproach. Had Christ been a mere philosopher, he would have given more attention to the modes and minutiae of teaching; or if only an enthusiast, he would have placed his chief reliance on the wonder-working gifts of his agents; or if an ordinary moral teacher alone, Jesus would have given his disciples a larger body of casuistic instructions and formal rules. His giving due proportion to each, his foresight of all evil, and his promises that his grace should be sufficient to his servants, and that they should end their wondrous contest as more than conquerors, is a proof that Jesus was divine, and knew all the future more familiarly than man does the present, or history the past.

It now, therefore, remains to be seen whether the many promises which our Lord gave to his disciples, that they

should be guided into the way of all truth, and that the Spirit of truth should abide with them for ever; that they should heal the sick, cast out devils, and raise the dead; and that they should be rendered equal to all the trials that would befall them; were literally and fully performed in the experience of the apostles subsequently. If the promises of Christ were so fulfilled, he was a true prophet, and if a true prophet, the Son of God, for Jesus never professed to be a prophet alone: but if the promises of Christ, even in a single instance, were falsified by the apostolic history, then Jesus was not a true prophet, his miracles were incredible, and his doctrine loses its force and authority. For such is the importance of absolute veracity to the Divine nature, that if a single instance could be cited on any subject, or at any period, of a promise of Jehovah ever having been falsified in any form, God would have lost his moral empire in the world. How, then, are we to determine the question, whether the promises of Christ to his apostles were fulfilled? On this mighty and vital point, you perceive it is in vain to look to the contemporaneous histories of Greece, Egypt, or Rome, or to those of the oriental cities. It is not to be expected that secular writers would enter minutely into the affairs of that Christian church which they stigmatized as a gang of irrational visionaries: and it is equally hopeless to look for any illustration to the few Jewish writers of that period. In both, indeed, there are passing notices of the Christian doctrines and facts, but often distorted, and always inaccurate; and all reference to modern witnesses on this question is irrelevant, because they could only know what antiquity has first recorded.

Some may be inclined to regret that only a few of the apostles have left any written records. From the immediate body of the twelve primitive apostles, one apostatized *i.e.* Judas Iscariot; and of the remaining eleven, only four, Matthew, John, Peter, and James, became writers for the service of the church; and out of the whole body of the disciples, only eight have bequeathed to us documents historical or doctrinal; while the most voluminous of all

the sacred writers was Paul, the last appointed of the apostles; and whose conversion and sudden qualification to preach the Gospel, form of themselves two of the most striking proofs of the truth of Christianity, and particularly of the doctrine of Inspiration. But surely from eight contemporary writers, all eye-witnesses of the facts they record, and most of whom had personally known Jesus from the beginning, sufficient may be gleaned to satisfy any reasonable mind, whether the promises of Divine aid, made by Jesus, were actually fulfilled. We have not eight competent and credible historians of the fall of Carthage, or the triumphs of Alexander, or of the life of Cyrus, or of the destruction of Xerxes's army, or of the Parthian war; and yet we have no doubt of the truth of these facts, though sometimes the original record only came from one or two writers, and those far from infallible.

Let us now direct our attention for a few minutes to the character of the apostles prior to the death of Christ. Such as are familiar with the New Testament will remember many instances in which the disciples of Christ clearly proved before his death, that they were *not then* competent teachers of his religion, for they did not understand many of the doctrines of Christ, some of which excited pain, and others surprise, while some excepted even to those doctrines, and to certain acts in the conduct of Christ himself. It is equally known to the readers of the New Testament that if the apostles had understood the doctrines of Jesus, prior to his resurrection, they were incompetent to become such teachers of it as Christ required; for "by the way they had disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest." Two of the disciples would have burnt up a village of Samaria; Peter repudiated the prediction of Christ, that the Scribes and priesthood would kill him; he struck the servant of the high priest with the sword, in violation of his master's teaching; and not to mention his denial of Christ, we cannot forget how the apostles murmured at the seeming waste of that impassioned penitent who anointed his feet with a costly nard. It is quite

evident that such glaring defects of character would have neutralized any amount of Inspired powers of teaching if the apostles had possessed them before the death of Christ. Add to these the well-attested fact that they sometimes failed when they attempted to work a miracle, the record of which failure, though apparently unimportant, if not trivial, is of immense consequence as a proof, how different the apostles were, before the death of Christ, from what we find them after the day of Pentecost.

But when the apostles issue from their upper room on the morning of the feast of Pentecost, it is evident they had become new creatures indeed. Less than two months had transpired since the tragedy of Golgotha, and the interum had been too much a time of sorrow and surprise, of fluttering hope and despondent fear, to allow for any supposed educational improvement. But whether we incline to believe that the supernatural tuitions of the Spirit began at the resurrection, or came down upon them like a tropical rain first on that memorable Whitsuntide, it is evident that they were no longer dreaming and craven followers of Jesus of Nazareth, but had become familiar with all the bearings of his character on the prophetic ages, and on the world that lay in wickedness, as well as with the designs of Providence in reference to the Jewish Church. No further doubtful interrogations of each other respecting the import of the words and purpose of Christ, for one and all had become illuminated, and they argued, appealed, and reproved, as if they had been familiar with their themes for a century, and had nothing to fear from a powerful audience whom they accused of irreligion and of murder. The ever vehement and incoherent Peter now speaks in kindred oracular strains with the greatest of the prophets, and the igneous and aspiring sons of Zebedee are meek of language and docile in temper as the lamb that was being led, garlanded with a floral fillet, to the now God-forsaken altar. A long life of noble labours and extraordinary trials succeeded, but never, after the day of Pentecost, do we find the apostles either hesitant, divided, or erroneous in doctrines, nor culpable of departures in spirit or conduct

from the moral perfection which the gospel enjoined. And what is still more to the point, perhaps, in the judgment of some, there was no subsequent instance of an attempt to work a miracle which failed.

These remarkable facts must have had an adequate cause, and we find an ample one in the supposition that Jesus had imparted to the apostles the Holy Ghost, which, while it guided them into the way of all truth, sanctified their disposition, and energised their words and will, so that from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum the Lord went with them working signs. If this solution does not satisfy you who hesitate on the doctrine of Inspiration, or you who repudiate Christianity altogether, it is for you to explain these facts, and "bring forth your strong reasons." Here are three great facts which we have explained by assigning them to their adequate cause; if you reject our explanation, it is your duty to produce your own, but in its production we shall be content only with what accords with valid history, and with the undoubted laws of logical accuracy. If our solution of the difficulty remains undisproved we have made good our ground that Christ amply fulfilled the promises of supernatural assistance which he made to his disciples, and that he was therefore both a true prophet and the Messiah.

But it is important to ask, how did the apostles themselves account for their knowledge of the doctrines of Christ, for the integrity of their character, and for their possession of miraculous powers? These are legitimate and important questions; for though we must candidly admit that the declaration of the apostles that they were Inspired, would not prove that they were so, yet such a declaration, when accompanied, as it was, with the gift of miracles, and a hallowed temper, and in the absence of a possibly-misleading secular interest, renders their declaration in the highest degree credible. He can have read the New Testament only in a very uncritical and inattentive spirit who has not observed in the epistles of Paul, Peter, James, and his brother Jude, and of John, that in writing, in issuing commands, or in performing acts relative to the

establishment of Christianity, they all professed to be acting on divine authority; that they attributed their spiritual state not to the force of their character, the power of their convictions, or the strength of their will, but "to the grace that is in Christ Jesus," while it is equally evident to the readers of the epistolary documents of the New Testament, that the apostles considered themselves not to be uttering their own sentiments, so much as delivering the will of God. Not however to satisfy ourselves with this general statement, permit me to urge your attention for a proof of these particulars to the following passages:— 1 Corinthians ii, 12, 13, and 16; 1 Peter i, 3; 2 Peter i, 3, and 4; 2 Peter iii, 2; 1 John i, 1 and 5; Jude i, 1 and 17; James i, 1. Let it not be concluded that these are all the citations on this subject, which the writings of the apostles would yield. Far otherwise indeed is the fact; but it is enough to produce *any* extracts that shew the apostles considered themselves to be in possession of supernatural knowledge, and to be guided in their teaching and actions by the Spirit of God. But though I myself attach less importance to the declaration of the apostles on this subject than some others, perhaps less than I ought, I cannot suffer you to depart without drawing your attention to a remarkable feature of the apostolic writings, which, in my judgment, is far more conclusive that their authors were Inspired than any declaration made by themselves, and I am not sure whether it be not even more demonstrative of the point at issue, than their exercise of the miraculous energy of the Holy Ghost. I refer to the fact that the writings of the apostles were not a mere reiteration of the words of Jesus Christ, nor do they copy his style of teaching, nor are they the re-adjusted anecdotes of evangelic narrative, nor a modification of our Lord's parables. The discourses of Christ are evidently revelations, for the most part of fresh statute laws of divine justice or love; but the writings of the apostles are applications of those laws to the various exigencies of the Christian life, and they are developments of our Lord's principles into new forms of instruction, warning, or appeal. The epistles of Peter are

not mere re-productions of the words of Christ, they are deductions alike from the words of Christ, from the oracles of the prophets, and from the voice of history, adapted to the circumstances of the Hebrew exiles, to whom these epistles were addressed. Still more dissimilar are the writings of Paul to many things to be formerly found in the discourses of Jesus ; and the sentiments of John are equally remote from being mere copies of the great original prototype teachings of the Saviour himself. You cannot doubt that such is the fact. We ask then, and have a right to ask, how these five different epistolary writers, none of whom is a mere copyist of the words of Christ, and no two of whom resemble each other, and yet all are not only harmonious with each other, but accord most wonderfully with the previous instructions of Jesus, whom they never seemed to copy,—we ask how they came thus to accord, to deduce the same moral sentiments, the same duties, the same consolations, and the same views of fallen man, and redeeming mercy, if they were not Inspired? This question alone, in our esteem, is determinative of the Inspiration of the apostles ; and we are persuaded that there remains to be built on this ground such a fortress for the defence of the doctrine of Inspiration as can never be overthrown. Here is a vast body of truths deduced in most novel and authoritative forms by the apostles from the words and acts of Jesus ; if the apostles were not Inspired, how could they know that these particular deductions were in harmony with the mind of God, and how could we be confident that the conclusions which these writers drew from the life and death of their master were such, and such only, as God intended should be proclaimed as the evangelic law for the world? After all our labors we shall be probably told by some petty master of minute criticism, that the apostles might be Inspired both to act and speak in the name of Christ, and might even have received his previous assurances that they should be so Inspired, but that it does not follow that the Inspirative aid extended to their written productions. If that do not follow, let me remind you of what does follow, if their written instruc-

tions were excepted from the infallible supervision of the Spirit of God. We claim for Jesus foresight of human affairs, nor can that be denied without repudiating all faith in history. Did he, then, not foresee that the oral instructions of his agents would perish, and that their written instructions alone would not only live for ever, but become the only sources from which his doctrine could be drawn? But if we are to suppose these writings were not Inspired, we must believe Christ to have granted divine aid to his servants on the less and the temporary occasion, and to have refused it for the greater and the permanent service of the Church. It is surely of more importance accurately to instruct all ages, than one generation; and yet if the apostles were not Inspired, we must believe that Christ was solicitous for the infallible instruction of the first age, but that he abandoned all the succeeding ones to the end of the world, to chance, to tradition, and to error. The more remote from the times of Jesus, the more important becomes an infallible record of his mission to the earth, of his mandates to men, and of his directions to his people; but if we are to believe that the apostolic writings, in which the most important portions of the doctrines and duties of the Gospel are contained, were not Inspired, then Christ must have been more careful to guide those who lived at a period when they needed comparatively less instruction, and to have withheld it from the remoter descendants of the human race, whose dependence on an infallible record would be absolute. If Christ only granted Inspiration to living deeds and spoken words, and made no such provision for the accurate perpetuity of his doctrines, as Jehovah did through Moses, by writing, he was either indifferent to the wants of posterity, or formed a wrong estimate of the adequacy of the human intellect, or he forgot the main provision of the evangelic scheme. These are some of the inevitable alternatives to which we are driven, if we are to believe that the promise of Inspiration did not extend to the written compositions of the apostles. Nor are these all the dread results that follow from denying that the epistles are Inspired; for who could trust his wisdom, if Christ were

guilty of this great oversight? or his goodness, if he were thus partial? or his justice, if he expected obedience, and yet withheld sufficient evidence? or his love to man, if he thus relinquished him to a life of doubt? or his fidelity to his engagements, if in this instance the Saviour had violated our reason, by giving disproportionate attention to the fleeting and limited wants of one age, and neglecting those of unborn millions of perishable men?

Unless, then, we are greatly mistaken, we have made good our point, that the apostles were Inspired, and that Jesus had predicted they should become so; and we have done this without proposing any new readings of disputed passages, or taxing your thoughts with recondite criticisms, or burdening your memory with quotations from remote ages, or confusing your brain with the modern logomachies on the doctrine. We have confined ourselves to plain facts and obvious inferences, and we feel no hesitation in claiming, on these grounds, your assent to the four following propositions:—

I. If the apostles were guided by the Spirit of God in their instructions, and proved this fact by miraculous actions, by predicting events that have since occurred, and by an elevation of character inexplicable by reason alone, they may safely be regarded as infallible teachers.

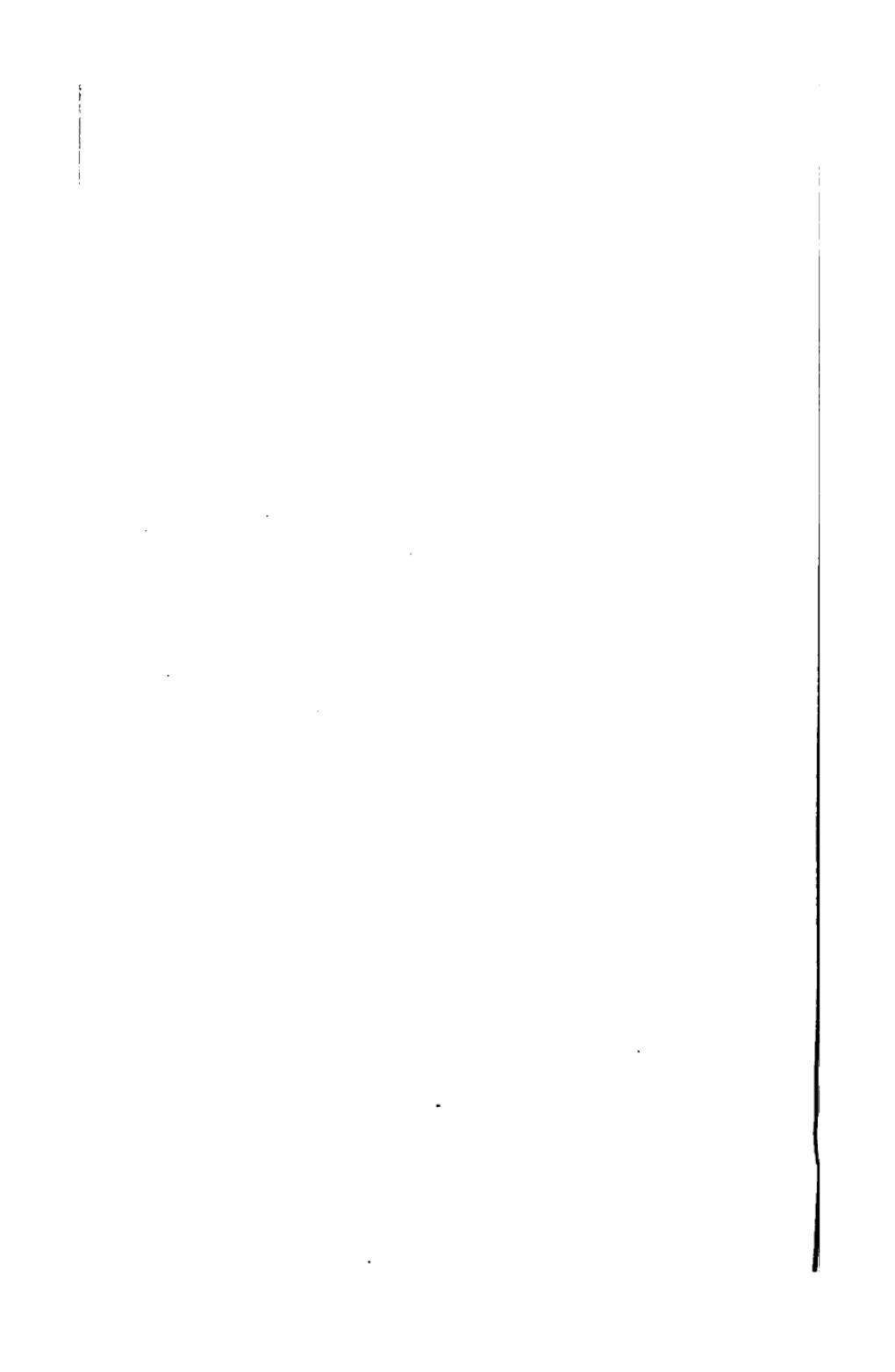
II. If the apostles wrought miracles and uttered prophecies, they must have been approved by God, and intended to act as his authorized agents.

III. If the apostles maintained a greater moral perfection after Jesus had left them than whilst under his visible instructions, there is no way of explaining that perfection but by admitting their Inspiration.

IV. If the apostles were agreed in the doctrines they taught, in the churches they founded, and in the discipline and officers they appointed for their preservation, considering how different they were in temperament, in original condition in life, and in educational advantages, these points of agreement can only be explained on the ground that they perfectly understood both the doctrine of Christ and that of the Old Testament, and that they were faithful

witnesses of facts; in short, that they were Inspired men, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

We have thus, by examining the previous mental condition of the apostles, by reminding you of their sudden and extraordinary elevation of soul on the day of Pentecost, by investigating the various promises made by Jesus prior to his crucifixion, by comparing the subsequent state of the apostles with those promises, by showing you the kind of proof of which this subject is alone capable, by eliciting the consequences that follow from the non-admission of the doctrine of Apostolic Inspiration, and from a variety of other aspects of the question, brought this part of the question to a close. You are sufficient judges of the facts we have adduced, and of the illustrations we have employed: judge now, therefore, solemnly and honestly, whether we receive the writings of the apostles of Christ on frivolous grounds. We have not pretended to solve all the difficulties of the question, nor can we; we admit some to be insoluble, but we are conscientiously convinced that they are not real impediments to our faith, and that many of them will disappear as we "follow on to know the Lord;" for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. iv, 18.



THIRD LECTURE.

**"IF THE BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE BE NOT INSPIRED, THEY
ARE FORGERIES."**

"He that speaketh truth showeth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit."—Proverbs xii, 17.

The manner in which the subject of this discourse is stated in the title, may possibly give offence to two sorts of persons; the timid christian may imagine that the application of the term "forgeries" to the books of Scripture, however potentially employed, is an irreverence and a presumption ill becoming a christian teacher; and the less dogmatical opponent of Inspiration may affirm, that though he repudiates the Inspiration of the books of the Bible, he yet considers them respectable and genuine documents, and resents having it thought that he is bold enough to believe them to be forgeries. My defence with the christian for the use of this title, I must leave to the general quality of my preaching, and my public actions; and my reason for affirming that the Scriptures, if not Inspired, are forgeries, is to destroy the fallacy that denies Inspiration to the divine documents, but would treat them as genuine though unauthoritative records. I believe this fallacy is very influential in our age, and I wish to show that it is a specious and a dangerous mistake,—that it is perfectly untenable, that the Scriptures are genuine though not

Inspired writings; and thus my object is to drive the doubter either to accept the question of Inspiration, with its difficulties, or that of forgeries, with its consequent absurdities. I have therefore chosen this curt mode of putting the subject before you, because it is decisive; and I intend, by the help of God, to borrow the logician's *argumentum ad absurdam*, and apply it to this discourse in favor of the Inspiration of the books of the Old and New Testament.

We must begin by explaining our views. When I state that the books of the Old and New Testaments are Inspired, I simply mean they were all written under a divine guidance; and we have shown you that miracles and prophecy, the supernatural contents of the books, and the holy lives, on the whole, of their writers, are sufficient proof that these writings are so Inspired. But we do not undertake to say which part of Scripture was composed under any particular mode of Inspiration. Nor would we be thought to believe that an equal amount of Inspiration would be required in the historical compositions, where the writers were eye-witnesses or contemporaries, or had easy access to true sources of information, as in the prophetic parts of the Bible, where no human aid whatever could be of any avail; or in the Epistles of the New Testament, which, for the most part, being logical deductions from the principles of Christ, or altogether new views of the christian system, would obviously require a much greater amount of supervisory wisdom to guide the reasoner to infallible inferences, or to enable him to give utterance to that which was as novel to the sacred writer as it was to the world. We hold fast by the Inspiration of the Old and New Testaments; but we would not presume to say whether Moses would require more divine help in fore-shadowing the future Shiloh and the grand outbirths of the love of God in remote times, than Paul, who, without previous training, or co-discipleship with the twelve, suddenly appeared as an apostle, and delivered his own wondrous and expanded version of the redemption by Christ, which, however, though thus separately and sud-

denly obtained, quadrates with all the other teachings of those who were disciples of Christ on the day of crucifixion. In short, we would at once say that whether John required more aid than Peter, or Luke than Mark, or both of them than Ezra, or Jude than James, are questions of no great importance to us, and even if they were, we have no means of solving them. We repudiate the spirit that demands all evidence or will accept none, as one of unthankfulness and pride; and we are also disinclined to refer the question of Inspiration to the court of metaphysics, at least until there are certain unchangeable maxims, and an infallible mode of arriving at truth better than by metaphysical analysis. And in thus refusing to have our cause tried in a metaphysical court, we are not moved with a prospect of defeat, but have two good reasons to justify our conduct. The first is, that metaphysical discussion alone, never settled one single moral truth to the satisfaction of mankind; and the second is, that in all the instances in which the truths of the Bible have been subject to mere metaphysical debate, they have invariably received far more damage than benefit. Witness the doctrine of the origin of evil, of its transmission from parent to child, of man's accountability, of the obligation and nature of faith, of the immortality of the human soul, of the divine decrees, of election and free will, of future punishment, and the rule of destiny. Now the Bible is either explicit on Inspiration or not. If it be, there is no need for the authority of the metaphysician; if it be not, all the word-warfare of the mere abstract reasoner can never break through the wall into the supernatural light; and therefore I would save myself and you the trouble of an appeal to a judge who cannot decide, and who, although he has the conceit to believe that he, and he alone, can, has no authority to decide, even if he had the power.

It will be also necessary to explain ourselves on the term forgery, and to show in what sense it is employed by us as the alternative to the non-Inspiration of the Scriptures. A forgery is a spurious invention, of any material or form, pretending to be what it is not, for the purpose of

securing any object which the author of the forgery cannot otherwise attain. A coin may be a forgery either because it is of inferior metal or destitute of the requisite inscriptions, or because it was not fabricated at the only places and by the only persons to whom the laws grant the privilege of coining. In any of these cases, we call it, whatever its size or nominal value, a counterfeit or forgery. An article of trade may be a forgery, purporting to be of the same fabric and form as the work of some celebrated artizan, but not its real maker. This species of forgery, which is far more common than base coining, we denounce as fraud or forgery. A book may be a forgery on several grounds; either because it contains matters that are not authentic, as Ossian's poems; or because it pretends to have been written by an author who had not composed it, as the Rowley papers of Chatterton; or because it professes to have a history, otherwise in its favour than it really has, as the Shakespeare documents by Ireland the artist. Such a book, on any of these grounds, would very properly be called a forgery. A Bill of Exchange is frequently forged, either by representing a fictitious transaction as valid, by adding to it names that are not *bona fide* signatures, or on several other grounds. A will may be a forgery, (and such a thing is not very uncommon,) either when it contains provisions which the testator knows his property will not realise, or when provisions are inserted contrary to his meaning, or when it is purposely drawn on an illegal instrument, or when it is attested by false witnesses. Forgery also prevails to a great extent in other departments,—in the manufacture of books, in the arts, in the funds, in the political world, and in short in every other department of life. A few leading properties, however, are common to every case of forgery; they are all a fraud, and vicious, because intended to deceive, but they are generally skilful imitations of the original.

And now let us apply these definitions to the subject before us. In the two previous discourses we have separately shown you that there is a redundancy of valid proof that both the Old and New Testaments are Inspired books,

and that they could never have existed in their present state if they had not been composed by "holy men of God," who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." We should have preferred to have dealt with all the books of Scripture *separately*, with the view of showing on what ground they individually claim to rank as the Inspired records of the world; but it is unfortunate for these extended enquiries, that the spirit of the age is not sufficiently patient to be tolerant, as our fathers were, of fifty discourses on one subject. We must leave this more expanded mode of dealing with the subject of Inspiration, by investigating every book of Scripture piecemeal, either to some quiet but competent christian scholar, who will be content to write in his study without the prospect of remuneration or fame, or to the future preachers of the church, when experience has again made profound sermons and erudite treatises necessary, if not popular. Meantime you perceive that as the Old and New Testaments profess to be Inspired documents, written expressly to act as permanent standards, to give authoritative light to the ignorant, to warrant faith and hope and every human virtue, as well as to censure every deflexion from them, either in thought, word, or deed, they are either such or they are not. If they be Inspired documents, they are the law of God, and the only body of moral law that man possesses; and woe to him who heeds not their warnings, or ventures where they prohibit, or loves what they condemn, or teaches what they do not sanction. But if these books, as the sceptical part of the world maintains, are not Inspired, how fearful the alternative! for in truth the Scriptures are forgeries, if they be not divine. I am aware of the *ruse* in some who disallow that the Bible is Inspired, and affect to feel shocked to hear the alternative of its being a forgery. They plead for an intermediate course, affirm that the books are as good as Seneca's Philosophy, Pliny's Letters, or Plutarch's Lives, and are to be placed on the same shelf, and treated with the same deference, and by no means to be denominated forgeries outright, even though they are denied to be Inspired. But we scorn to

be saved by a lie; and we will not let our hallowed books, if they cannot abide all, or any fair tests, escape by a courteous shuffle; nor will we accept a compliment for Paul or Moses from the man who would rob us of our God, of our Redeemer, of all that has fed the purest hope and the most intellectual or unlettered virtue of the world for many thousand years. We are like Charles I, in the one thing, of "loving a positive doctrine;" for we abhor the intermediate region that scepticism would pale off and call neutral territory, as being neither avowedly for Inspiration nor infidelity,—a territory that has always been a favorite spot with the great enemy of man, and notorious for harbouring far more of the opponents, than of the friends of Christianity. On so important a subject, we dread a rash assertion or a crude metaphor, or an ill-considered suggestion; but our judgment is confident that in contending that the Scriptures are either Inspired or forgeries, we render service to the truth, and to the sceptic himself; and that we quicken virtuous doubt into faith, and the dubitancy of the foe into outspoken hostility to our sacred records, which is far preferable to his teasing the simple with queries that the most acute can never solve, or perplexing the understanding of the enquirer with suggestions that originate in animosity to the Christian scheme, and only assume the appearance of candor the more effectually to betray.

I. The sacred writings appear to contain as much of the moral history of the human race as was necessary to form a permanent basis for faith, and to justify the Divine Being in the plans he has taken to punish the transgressor of his laws, to avenge his own dishonored claims, to expel evil from the heart of man, and to restore perfect virtue to the world. It is with these views that we are furnished with the history of the creation, the manner in which sin entered the world, and to what a different development in human action and thought it immediately gave rise. It is of little importance to us how the antediluvians built, planted, or traded; but we have a vast interest in the question whether only some of them were sinners from

accidental causes, or whether the virus of sin had tainted the whole genus of man, and justified the course taken by the Almighty with those early races? Of small benefit can it be to us or to later posterity to know, what were the civic conditions of the Noachidæ; but was it of no consequence that we should have a valid record to prove that the huge calamity of the deluge had produced no moral improvement in the will or the feelings of man towards his Maker? To some it may appear trivial that many of the narratives in the book of Genesis should have been preserved, and others omitted; but looking on this and every other historic portion of the Word of God as illustrative of the moral state of man, whom no facility in obtaining wealth, no climate, no advantages of scenery or locality, prevented from being always hostile to God, to truth, and to virtue, we see the value of those records to be beyond all price. Jehovah had brought the vast charge, that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," and it became him to prove to posterity that it was so. But how could he convey that proof to us, unless by preserving such fragments of the moral history of man as would illustrate the charge? And hence we have sufficient of the records of the Egyptian, the Hebrew, the Syrian, the Arab, the Edomite, the Ethiopian, the Phœnician, the Ninevite, the Persian, the Babylonian, the Greek and the Roman, the Asiatic, the African, and the European. It is true we have not extensive records in the Bible of these diverse sections of the human family, but we have such excerpts as are sufficient to throw light on the moral history of all, and which make it evident that the whole race was corrupt, and that there are no other exceptions in favor of virtue than such as are to be accounted for through the interpositions of divine grace.

The value of the historic portions of the Scriptures, even when they seem only to be obscure biographies, or short episodes, is immense; but this value is only appreciable by the possessor of the life of true religion. I do not refer this importance of the historic portion of Scripture,

to their mere history, though in that light alone they claim not only the highest rank, but the first place in that rank. The Pentateuch is anterior by above a thousand years to the earliest books of any other known nation, and furnishes us with the only primitive annals of mankind that we possess; and adding to this fact the consideration that the Old Testament is a more consecutive history of the Hebrew people, from their cradle in Ur of the Chaldees to their final destruction by Vespasian, than any other nation can boast, must give a historic pre-eminence to the Old Testament, of which no ingratitude, scepticism, or hostile criticism will ever deprive it. But this book of history may be thus valuable, we are told, and not be Inspired. Granted; but let us for the moment suppose the Old Testament did not exist. I then ask the ethnologic sceptic, or the advocate of reason, or the worshipper of nature, to tell us how moral evil came into the nature of man? He will probably deny that man was ever more perfect than he is; but I rejoin, do not all the fabulous legends of Egypt, of Greece, of Persia, of India, of Rome, and even of the aborigines of America and Australia contain the same story,—that the first inhabitants of the world were virtuous? And do not they all attempt to explain how evil first possessed man? Whence did all their legends come? and have not the rejectors of revelation, time out of mind, maintained that the fables of all nations contain some original truth? But let me repeat my question, How did moral evil enter the world, if the accounts of Moses are to be rejected? You cannot tell; nor can you say that the subject is not of the gravest importance. If man be not culpable for the entrance of sin, there can be no such a thing as original sin; and while we need not deplore the Edenic tragedy on this hypothesis, God has no right to accuse man of eating the forbidden tree, or of treating this act as a transgression. But the uniform language of Scripture is, that sin entered through man's disobedience, and all men are treated as sinners, as well because they are evil-doers, as because they are the descendants of sinners. Of the law and the gospel this fact is the com-

mon basis. Now this subject is a matter of such consequence, that it was necessary that we should have something more to trust to than an ordinary history, and that something could only be an Inspired history. Such the Old and New Testaments profess to be: if they are so, there is no other name under heaven but that of Christ, by which we can be saved; but if they are not Inspired histories, they have deceived us, and are nothing better than forgeries.

If sin entered the world by accident, or from the irresistible force of circumstances, or merely from the cause that man was without experience, or because he lacked requisite instruction, or from the inevitable law of created things to degenerate, or from the will of God, or from the disproportioned force of appetite, then you perceive, though moral evil did enter the human heart, it could never be righteously charged upon man as sin; and it becomes a matter of intense interest to know from which of all these causes man became corrupt; for if he became evil from causes that he could not control, it is not just in Jehovah to treat him as a sinner for doing what he could not help doing. Now on all these points profane history is either silent, or gives no satisfactory explanation; we are, therefore, either left in the dark on this mighty topic, or we must take the views which Scripture gives, and consider man the voluntary and culpable author of his own fall. And if this be not the true doctrine, the book of Scripture must have deceived us, and cannot be Inspired; for if it be not an Inspired history it must be a forgery, since it professes to be the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

But the Bible is not only a history of the early condition of man; it professes to contain the true history of the means by which the Jews were delivered from Egypt, of that series of miraculous events that led to their incorporation and preservation as a nation, of the giving of the Mosaic law, and of the conquest of Canaan. The Scriptures also profess to be a history of that unique succession of men, the prophets, of whom no nation has had a parallel

instance; as well as of the persons, the miraculous performances, and the doctrines of Christ and his apostles. Now if there be one thing that the Bible explicitly avows, it is, in almost every form of asseveration, that it contains the genuine history of these things. If it do contain such genuine history, then the book must be Inspired, for the greater part of its authors were either workers of miracles, or prophets; but if it is not such a genuine history, there is no alternative but to regard the Scriptures as a cunningly-devised fable, in short, a forgery.

II. The books that we call the Scriptures profess to contain the moral law, to which it is the duty of all men to conform themselves, and by which God will judge the race, and apportion rewards or punishments accordingly. This book has not delivered the law of God in a systematic form, or in philosophical terms, or in classified arrangements. God has taken the inconceivably wiser plan of issuing only so much of the moral law as suited the occasion; a mode far more likely to make the law efficacious, than to deliver it as a whole, without reference to local aptitudes or temporal exigencies.

The far greater advantages of this mode of teaching by extemporary legislation will appear if we consider the circumstances of the case. Let us suppose that the moral law, as taught by Moses, had been given to Adam; would it have been intelligible, or have contributed to his preservation, or his fall? Or if it had been possible to have given the whole body of the prophecies to the Jews in Egypt, what a tissue of improbabilities,—obscure, irrational, or uninteresting,—would they not have appeared? Or let us imagine that the moral precepts and doctrines of Christ and his apostles, with their no less wondrous history, had been given to the Jews in the days of Hezekiah or Ezra, could the men of that period have appreciated or credited either the theory, the doctrines, or the duties of the Christian system? The premature publication of parts of the moral law would not have been attended with more disastrous results, than if it had been issued in a systematic and classified form of analyzed obligations. Not one of a

thousand would have understood the import of laws so given; you could not have then put the book into the hands of childhood or ignorant persons, for it would have required more powers of reasoning and self-command than many of the intelligent can claim; while it would have been more difficult to remember, and would have been altogether unsuitable as a book of religious education; and, above all, we should have missed in a systematized moral law that fine power with which a history drives home a truth to the judgment, or that mystic force that shoots, through a poetic composition, a moral verity to the heart. But whether you agree with me in this or not, you cannot be insensible to the fact that the books of Scripture everywhere address us in the style and authority of law. They do not reason so much as command; they never propitiate criticism, or court audience, but address us from the throne of the Eternal; admit none of the artificial distinctions of society, and never quote the authority of human opinion as any sanction to their declarations; but content themselves with delivering the law or the testimony, and declare that the words of Scripture can never be superseded nor disproved. The Bible undertakes to declare what is good and what is evil, to define both, and to discriminate between similitudes of good and evil. It claims to legislate for the heart, for all nations, and for all times, and for every state of the soul. It enjoins what is to be cultivated, and what is to be achieved. It dictates opinions, and professes to guide the conscience; and it publishes moral tests by which we are to arrive at the knowledge of our moral state. To the believer in distress or doubt, the Scripture addresses consolation and encouragement; and to the evil it addresses admonitions or threatenings; while to the doubtful it offers a clue, and to the negligent or the irresolute it communicates less in terms of reasoning than of reproof.

It is needless to quote instances illustrative of all this magisterial bearing of the Inspired volume, as it is scarcely possible to open a page without finding at once many instances to the point. The most ordinary reader, of the most feeble faculties, must admit that the Scriptures

address him as a master, and that they never sue for his patronage, nor ask his permission to instruct. This is a peculiarity in the Scriptures which sets them apart from all other writings. Let us grant for a moment that these books are Inspired or divine productions, and their authoritative air is at once natural and explained. If they be the law of God, mandative language is becoming. It is the wronged and ill-requited Jehovah, addressing his fallen, his unhappy, and disobedient subjects; any other form of speech would be unsuitable to the relative condition of the creature and his Creator. But if these books be not Inspired, they have no right to be thus definitive and magisterial; for if they be the unaided compositions of ordinary though gifted and honest men, they may contain some, and even many errors. If the Scriptures be not Inspired books, they are dogmatical and intolerant, they leave less liberty to thought than other writers, they never imply their own possible error, or the possibility of superior compositions ever appearing to supersede them. If the Scriptures be not Inspired books, they cannot be the works of good men, for they affect to determine how God thinks, how he will act for ever, and in what way he will judge all, and how the inhabitants of other worlds feel towards this; and they aspire not only to fix what is good and evil, but have uttered a malediction on any other writers that might ever arise to contravene their authority. In short, the Scriptures are Inspired or they are forgeries, for professing to contain the moral law of God to the whole human race, if they do not contain it.

III. The Scriptures undertake to impart to men the true knowledge of the Divine Being, his character, his purposes, his motives of action, and a large portion of his plans of governing his creatures. We must at once admit the supreme importance of this kind of truth, since it is absolutely necessary to any true religion at all; for the knowledge of our reason of worship, and the God whom we profess to serve, and in whom we confide, must precede our intercourse with him, and regulate the quality of the services we offer to his acceptance, or the confidence we

repose in his promises of aid or his power to chastise. Where the object of worship is not first known, there will either be no religion whatever, or a false one; and this, in truth, is the philosophic secret that all the nations that have not possessed a revelation have gone wrong, alike in their worship and their conceptions of virtue and vice; for they have erected forms of religion before they had found out God, and determined to call some things good and others evil, without first knowing the will of that Supreme Being who has made it our duty and interest to follow the one and avoid the other. It is equally obvious that, necessary as this knowledge of the divine nature is, as the first step of genuine religion, human reason, in its present state, cannot find out God, at least if we are to place any reliance on the uniform experience of mankind for six thousand years. But even though we had no experience to assure us of the fact that "man by searching cannot find out God," it requires very little consideration to convince ourselves that such is the fact. God is not visible, has no bodily parts, and has never been seen by the senses of man; and though he vouchsafes to us, in a multitude of forms, the proof that he exists, yet if he cannot be seen by the senses, and if all our knowledge of external objects must come, in one form or other, through the senses, God must reveal himself, or he can never be known. So the founders of all religions have felt, and so must we feel if our reasoning on the subject be strictly logical. How, then, can we attain this necessary knowledge of the true God? Possibly another man, who has himself found out God, may inform us? But I ask how did *he* attain this knowledge? for, if by reasoning alone, how can he convince me that his knowledge is infallibly certain? as nothing short of this can satisfy my judgment and my conscience on so important a question. Even if you tell me that this information has descended from the first parents of the race, I can place no greater faith in it on account of its antiquity. My anxious heart still demands to know how the first parents of mankind could find out a Creator whom they could not see? And thus, you perceive, all men in

all ages are in this predicament, that they cannot have a religion till they know God, and Him they cannot know unless he is graciously pleased to reveal himself. Now the books of the Old and New Testament profess to give us a true knowledge of God, they explain how the knowledge originally revealed has been gradually increased, and how miracles and prophecy successively attested these communications from heaven. It is true the Scriptures do not attempt to explain the psychologic nature of God; but they declare him to be omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; self-existent, and eternal; as perfectly happy and as morally good, as he is powerful and wise; holy, but compassionate to man; just, but delighting in mercy; patient, but absolutely true to his word; jealous of his own honor, but considerate of the liberties of his creatures; the source of all life, and of all that is good, and yet attentive to the minutest affairs of his offspring; governing the universe through the agency of secondary causes, but answering the prayers of such as call on him in sincerity and truth. This is an outline of the knowledge of the divine character which the Scriptures impart. If such knowledge be true, and unattainable by reason, and is yet found in the Scriptures, then it is clear that these books are Inspired; but if they are not Inspired, what they contain on the subject of the divine nature, character, and government cannot be authoritative, as it may not be true. But the Scriptures declare that this knowledge is true, and came from God; and if, therefore, these books be not Inspired, they are forgeries.

IV. The books of Scripture profess to contain the only plan by which man can be saved. All the systems of moral philosophy admit that human nature is very defective, both in its powers of reasoning, the moral feelings, and in the force of conscience; but none of these systems, ancient or modern, ever discovered a remedy for those evils, other than that in the Christian system. To this system we owe alike the history and exposition of man's moral corruption, and many important notices of spurious means that have been tried to perfectionate human nature, and not only the

grand succedaneum—*propitiation*, but the Bible also furnishes us with a knowledge of how the redemption of Christ becomes efficacious on the soul. It cannot be denied that by faith in Christ multitudes have not only abandoned a course of vice, but have become eminently virtuous and happy. But would that effect have been produced in one single instance if there had not been absolute faith that the remedy of salvation was not only true but divine? No; for we can no more believe a lie, than we can repose in facts which we have reason to doubt; and such is the deep and wondrous thirst for certainty in the conscience, that man could never give credence even to the assertions of apostles if they were assertions alone.

The authors of various uninspired plans for the amelioration of the world, never, unless they are bigots, represent their schemes as the only ones. All modest men at most think their modes of human improvement are good for the time, perhaps the best that have yet appeared; but no one has had the hardihood to affirm that his plans could not be improved, and that the time would never come when they would be superseded. But Paul and the rest of the apostles denied that there was any other Saviour than the man Christ Jesus; that his blood *alone* cleanseth from all sin; that "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." And still more emphatically one of these apostles exclaims, "though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel to you than ye have received, let him be accursed." Nor do the apostles stand alone in this exclusiveness, for their great master taught, "If other Christs arise, either in the desert or the city, go ye not after them." Think for an instant what these declarations imply. Are they not tantamount to repeated assertions that Christianity would have no successor? that it never could, and never ought to be superseded? No matter what light science might cast over the obscurities of nature, or how much the arts of life might humanize or polish men, or however large resources history might yield in future ages, though other men as eloquent and sagacious as Plato and Bacon, or Locke and Euclid

might arise, nothing could be discovered, according to Christ and the apostles, that would equal or neutralize the Gospel. None of us will venture to say as much of any existing system of government, art, commerce, or philosophy; for we believe that the world will improve, and that most of the things now in high repute, will fall into decay. But the apostles and Jesus declare that this mutation cannot befal the Gospel, and that no discoveries, either by the human brain, or by combined experience, will ever, in the existence of the world, consign the evangelical plan to the class of things worn out. Now, unless the Gospel be the only remedy for the moral evils of the soul, Christ and his apostles must have strangely erred in affirming that it is. But if it be so, how could they know it, unless they were filled with the Holy Spirit? And as Christ and his apostles maintained that no other system of salvation would or could arise, and that this Gospel would be co-extensive with the race, how can we avoid the alternatives, that either such is the fact, and that the apostolic writings were Inspired to reveal that fact, or the Gospel is not what its founders claimed for it, and that therefore the books of Scripture are forgeries?

V. The books of Scripture profess to explain what becomes of mankind after death. If there be anything in which all men of all ages have been agreed, it is in their utter ignorance of what transpires beyond the moment of death. But if there be nothing known by unaided reason on this awful subject, it cannot have arisen from the absence of a general desire to penetrate the trans-mortal state. Guilt, fear, and hope, have combined with curiosity, imagination, and science, to solve this vast enigma, and yet the sceptic or the pagan of to-day is not a whit wiser than he was four thousand years ago. Every morning at sunrise many a wasted form of maternal grief, many a bereaved widow or childless sire, has been wont to hang far over the confines of mortal realities, gazing wistfully, but vainly, into the unsurveyed unknown. While the groveller has been content to believe that we die like the slaughtered ox, or the famished camel, and are no more; pride has flattered

itself that if a Judge of human deeds exists, he will not harshly investigate mortal weakness; or the guilty may have believed, that at least the unquenchable fires of self-torturous thought would be slaked in the grave. But neither one nor the other has ever solved the problem. The old Egyptian invoked Isis to shed light beyond the tomb; the pensive Roman called aloud to Jupiter to ease his aching heart on the fate of his newly-buried son; as at present, the thoughtful Hindoo believed and doubted by turns that man may live beyond the organization of his flesh. All the learned, and the poets, the pagan priests, and the mystic soothsayers felt the same anxiety to open the portal of the grave and gaze into the abyss of hereafter. Had it been in the power of unaided reason to solve this huge problem, stimulated as it has ever been by every keen motive and intense feeling that man knows, that problem would long before this have been solved. By searching, men have read the stars, and explored the essences of nature, and deduced what no history had recorded of the early state of our globe; and if study alone could have demonstrated man's future condition, there is no room for doubt that it would have been done. But the Gospel of Christ was the first system that brought immortality into certain light. The Jewish Church had the partial knowledge before, but it was reserved to the apostles of Jesus to expound the condition of the just and the unjust after death definitively; and definitively, indeed, do they speak on this subject. There is no conjecture or dubitancy in John's description of heaven, or in our Lord's portraiture of the state of the lost. The New Testament speaks of this future, not with the modesty of writers who timorously advanced what was only problematical or presumptive, but always with authoritative explicitness. They imply *no* doubt on the subject, and leave no room to any. But it is evident that Christ and his apostles could not have gained this knowledge by mere reasoning. If the facts be as the Scriptures represent, they are Inspired documents; and if not, then there is no avoiding the conclusion that they must be forgeries, because they have authoritatively

taught what they could never have known but through revelation.

VI. The Scriptures, among a large mass of information on the subject of Satanic agency, declare that it is continually active in effecting the ruin of mankind. This subject is another of those departments of knowledge, to which we could never have been admitted in any other way than by revelation. It has been shown in previous paragraphs, why man knows nothing and can know nothing of the spirit-world by the mere force of reason. There is an abundance of things, even in nature, of which it is agreed we know nothing; as, for instance, how animals so difficult to be taught anything by us, learn so rapidly everything that pertains to their food, enemies, diseases, and pleasures from each other. We know as little of the mode in which some of them reason on a limited scale; or how the ants, the bees, the locusts, and the herd of wild animals act in concert. If then, within the world we occupy, so many plain and obvious things defy the utmost powers of our reason to explain, it is not surprising that beyond the acknowledged limits of reason we know nothing certainly but what we are told, or in other words, what is revealed. Satanic existence and its agency about man could never have been discovered by reason alone; though it might and did discover, before revelation explained these melancholy facts, that a powerful evil spirit somewhere existed, and that it disturbed human affairs. But how that evil spirit came to be evil, who and what it is, and by what modes it obstructs human happiness, and what are its limits and doom, were subjects that we only came to know from the Bible. And in speaking of this subject, the Scriptures everywhere employ, not the cautious and wavering terms of a half-certain philosophy; they do not proceed with the deference to our opinion that implies the possibility of being deceived, but the word of God, in imparting knowledge respecting Satan, assumes the same magisterial style of conscious infallibility with which it narrates that God created the heavens and the earth, or that God loved the world. All, therefore, that the sacred

writers record on Satanic existence and its hostility to us, they must either have found out by their own reason, derived it from history, or invented the story, or the knowledge must have been revealed to them. Many circumstances combine to warrant our saying that the sacred writers were less likely than many other men to make this discovery by reason, if the subject had been so discoverable; for God has rarely chosen agents of that class, that men would have been in danger of unduly extolling. The sacred penmen could not have derived this Satanic knowledge from history, for the former ages were less likely to be wise in this matter than the later. It is needless, I presume, to refute the charge that the writers of the Bible invented this department of supernatural knowledge; for if they did, instead of true and holy men, they were liars and novelists; and therefore one conclusion remains, and but one, namely, that when the Scriptures describe to us Satanic influence, they do it on their authority as Inspired records, and if they be not Inspired the books must be forgeries, for they profess to teach what they could only know by Inspiration from God.

VII. The Scriptures profess to instruct men on various particulars of the Divine government, which their writers could never have known, unless they were inspired with the Divine wisdom. We can see clearly enough, but those who have not possessed the Revelation have often failed to do so, that the world is governed by one omnipotent, perfectly wise, and just Ruler; for many things are deducible from the acts of this Divine Governor of the universe from what we behold. But the communications of Scripture on this subject are various and great, and none of the following particulars could ever have been known by reason alone. The writers of the Bible narrate the fall of the devil from the realms of light through his pride and disobedience, and the punishment inflicted on this memorable transgressor; that the whole plan of the Divine government was pre-ordained; that good angels are employed to minister to them who are heirs of salvation; that all evils work together for the individual advan-

tage of those who love God; that the Spirit of God diffuses extra-natural aid to men to help their infirmities in the conquest of evil, and the attainment of perfection; that God has engaged to answer the prayers of his servants in the mode most becoming himself and them; that a day is appointed for the final and public judgment of the congregated race of men, and that Christ Jesus will act as the Judge. It is unnecessary to consume your time, either in proving that the Scriptures do communicate these things to us, or that mere reason, either by force of cultivation, or by natural acuteness, could ever have unaidedly discovered them. If, then, the Word of God make these declarations, they must either be true or false. If they be false statements, then the books of Scripture must be forgeries, for they state what is supposed not to be true; but if the affirmations of the Bible on the foregoing questions be true, the writers must have been inspired, unless we maintain the irrational proposition that the sacred authors discovered these truths without supernatural aid. But we are absolutely certain that they could not so have discovered them, because the secret and voluntary purposes of God, the occurrences of the spiritual world, and the future plans of providence for conducting human affairs, all persons, of the lowest and the highest degrees of intellect, accord in believing to lie far beyond the limits of what human reason was, or ever can be able to know without divine teaching.

We have now reviewed the historic teachings of the Bible, what it contains respecting the laws of God, what it communicates of the divine nature and character; that it declares the Gospel to be the only system by which man is or ever can be saved; what the Bible tells us becomes of man after death, and what it records of the being and history and machinations of Satan, and its exposition of many of the peculiarities of divine providence. One remark applies to all these sections of the teaching of the Scriptures, which is, that they are all subjects plainly above the capacity of reason to know; and we have successively applied the alternative, that since these teachings

are to be found in the sacred canon, could not have been discovered by reason, nor invented by men of religious character, whose fundamental virtue is the love of truth, that there is no escape from the dilemma,—If the Scriptures be not forgeries, they are Inspired; but if they be not Inspired, and are forgeries, as such they ought to sink into disesteem. We might have applied the same mode of argument to other peculiarities of the Bible, but more than sufficient proof is always detrimental to any object,—a truth that John the apostle evidently knew, for he intimates at the close of his gospel, that if the evidences of Christianity had been multiplied, it would rather have operated to the destruction, than to the corroboration of the faith. You have now the clue of the argumentative labyrinth in your own hands; and I urge you, the doubters, and you, the repudiators of our faith, as well as you, the believers without doubt or pre-examination, carefully to re-tread the path; and impute it to the preacher's want of clearness, or of language, or of learning, if, upon retrospection, the argument appear to you invalid or bald; but we pray you to remember that in favour of any falsehood, such facts could never have been mustered, nor even so explained.

It now only remains for us to bespeak your candid construction of the attitude into which this argument has been thrown. It may seem to some who are superficial, or who will not be just, that this discourse has the appearance of being an assault on Reason. This is far indeed from being the case. On all questions short of the supernatural, the infinite, and the eternal, we own no master but reason, the natural monarch of the earth, who never dies, and will never need a successor. In our judgment, philosophers and kings, poets, artists, merchants, and scholars, are only worthy of deference in as far as they accord with Reason. The civic ruler might wish to exempt his claims from the investigation of reason; the lawyer would set up antiquity as a standard; the merchant pleads custom as his judge; and the artist prefers beauty as his inspiration. I appeal against them all to Reason, and

affirm that no law ought to exist, no tax to be paid, no charter to be administered, and no institution to be honored, that Reason has not first approved. We are not Reason's foemen, but we will not be its blind worshippers, or its branded helots. Above Reason, are truth and God; and if we yield an absolute credence to "every word that procedeth out of the mouth of God," and question every dogma that Reason advances, it is not that we love Reason less, but God more. God is perfect; but human reason, though, like Lucifer, born in heaven, has fallen, if it be now recovering the heights of Paradise again.

Reason is, however, not the only antagonist against the Inspired authority of the sacred books of Scripture; for they have a rival of a far different, and less ethereal, but more insidious aspect in tradition—that *Jupiter Aureus* of the Papal priesthood. But the difference between the antagonism of Reason with Inspiration, and that of Tradition is very remarkable. Reason, when disordered, sits as a judge upon the deeds and words of Inspiration, and tries them by subtle tests and hard ordeals: it interrogates often with a leer, and criticises without respect or fixed rule. Such reason often tosses the divine words of holy prophets into the dust, and in its scornful disdain tramples underfoot documents that the seers of old Araby and Mesopotamia thumbed with pondering reverence; nay this ill-disciplined reason sometimes goes further, and raves like the Cumean Sibyl; or, inflated with a ventose pomp, aims to raise itself a critical throne, and to utter thence infallible nostrums at which childhood smiles, or thoughtful sorrow wails. But Tradition, the other rival of Inspiration, yields a seeming homage to the Inspired books, yet claims to have inserted among them the written or unwritten opinions of an indefinite antiquity. Tradition is not an upstart of yesterday, but rose when the grass had barely sprung on the graves of the prophets, and wrestled lustily from age to age in the Jewish Church for possession of Moses' chair. Nor was it an unheeded rival; for it flattered the erudition of the scribe, and the pomp of the priest, and the soul of the pharisee; and when the Lord

of life and glory came to his temple, he complained that the glosses and conjectures of tradition had covered and nullified the original law. And no sooner had the spirit of Inspiration produced the New Testament, and the Apostles were gathered to their fathers, than Tradition again began to compete for that seat which the sacred writers had left vacant evermore. Nor does tradition plead for its authority without speciousness. Did not the Christians, even in the days of Polycarp, venerate the sites on which the martyrs bled? and ought not we also, it argues, to have sainted days and consecrated stations? Was not Cyprian a holy man near the Apostles' time, and as he was a rigorous disciplinist, should not we also have our church laws to bind the catechumen, the lapsed, and the heretic? Were not the church fathers, in the days of Tertullian, wont to assemble in synod, and to recommend a life of celibacy as one of supereminent virtue; and may not the clergy now convene, Tradition enquires, to rectify the disorders of the age, and holy women and men set the laws of nature aside and eschew the marriage ring as an unholy usage? Or Tradition pleads that as St. Athanasius invoked a fearful doom over his opponents, and St. Austin defined "things hard to be understood," may not we curse Meroz too, and fill up with our cement all those parts of the divine workmanship that Apostles left incomplete? And thus, as errors have arisen in succession in the church, they have always ranged themselves under the banner of Tradition, which has created priests without wives, churches without liberty, prayers of many forms and no spirit, liturgies without Scripture, and creeds without harmony; in short, what error may not Tradition sanction, or for what vanity has it not argued and persecuted by turns?

Of the two assailants of Inspiration, indocile Reason and ruthless Tradition, it is far easier to silence the former, than to vanquish the latter. For Reason, in its pride, courts only the audience of the intellectual, and produces merely fabrics of artistic literature, which but few can estimate. But Tradition prefers to be the associate of the

vulgar, to appeal to the passions of the untutored, and the unreflecting; it chooses rather to trade in the tropes of beauty, and fragments of the obscure, than in syllogism, or deductive laws. Reason alleges to owe no respect for names, and to look upon ancient times as the junior, or unschooled periods of the human family; while Tradition captures churches, cities, and kingdoms with memorable names, and legendary chronicles; and sturdily proclaims that the remote, the antecedent, and the pictorial relic are safer guidance for the modern world, than its own science, logic, or experience. We have need, indeed, to be watchful of the encroachments of either; but a very general survey of the state of Christendom at present would convince all, that immeasurably more harm has been inflicted on the cause of the Gospel through the innovations of Tradition, and that the doctrine of Inspiration itself has been more radically damaged by these seemingly amicable pleonasms, than by the ireful onslaught of a reason that will not defer, even to Deity, nor abide by its own axioms and rules.

It now remains for you to determine whether, in urging that "if the sacred writings be not Inspired they are forgeries," we have justified our proposition, and made it evident, that no intermediate character can be equitably assigned to the books of the Old and New Testaments. It may, perhaps, aid your judgment to remind you that the Inspired writers have to be considered in various aspects. They were *witnesses* of what they saw and heard; *historians* of what they and their associates performed; they were the best *judges* of what they had experienced, and had become; they were *martyrs* whom no suffering, or evil prospects could deter from their work; they were *agents* that professed to be authorized by Jehovah to act and speak in his name; they were *expositors* of the mind and purpose of Christ; and they were also *examples* of the power of that religion they taught to others. If it can be shown that they were these, then the books of Scripture are inevitably to be regarded as Inspired. But if, as witnesses, it can be shown that these authors were false or

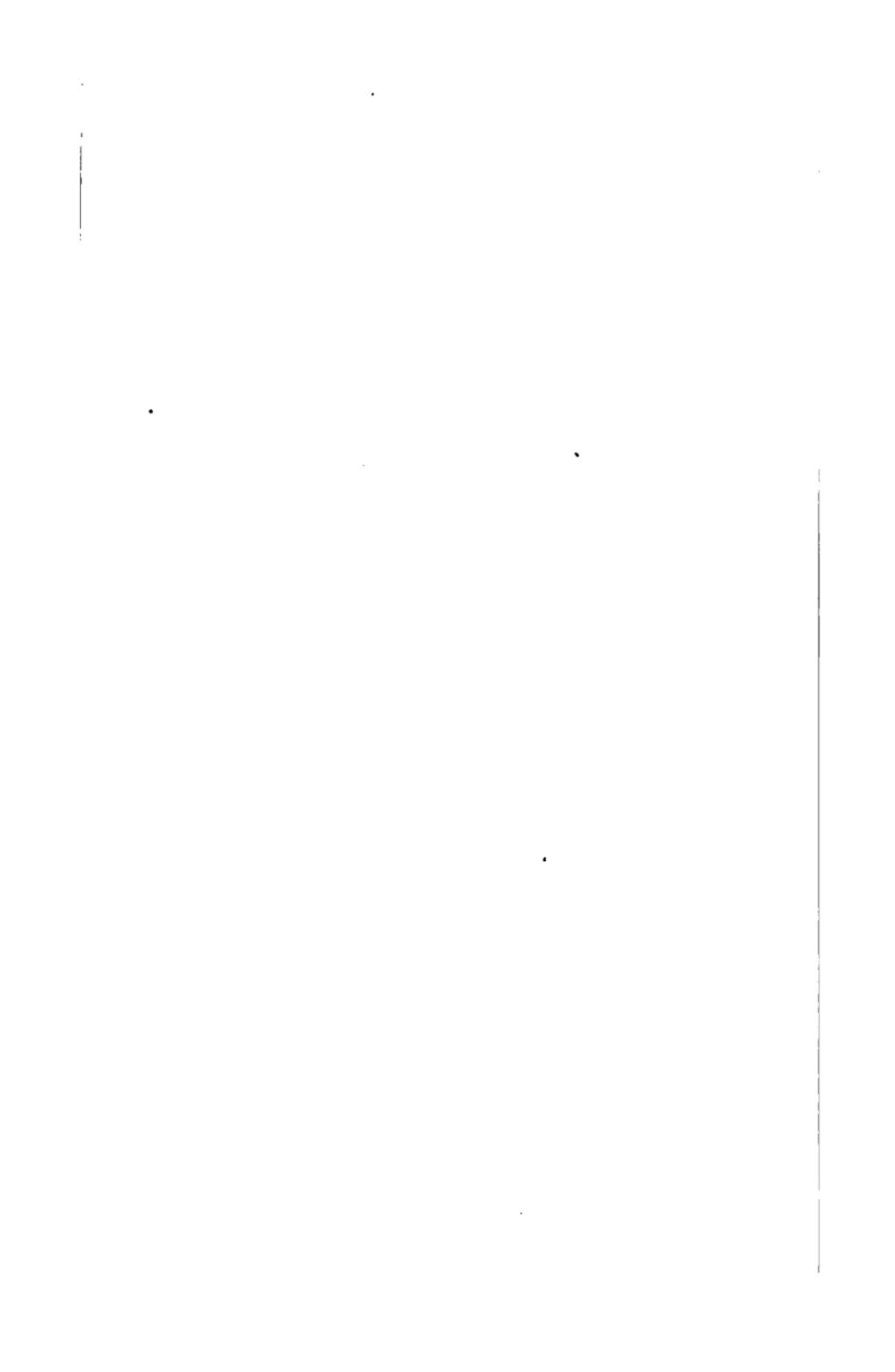
incompetent; that as historians they have been discredited; that as judges of themselves they were deceived; that as martyrs they were merely tenacious of their opinions; that as agents they were without credentials, or exceeded their instructions; that as expositors they were either incapable or unfaithful; or that as examples they were pretenders only; then the books of Scripture are *not* Inspired, for we have shown you that the Prophets and Apostles professed to speak and act in the name of God.

Long as you have been detained on this topic, it would not be just to dismiss this assembly without reminding it of what follows if the books of Holy Writ are not Inspired compositions but forgeries. Then not only are all we of the church in devious thrall, and the future ages as well as ourselves as much without the means of future happiness as the pagan worshippers of Osiris and Thammus, but all the antecedent worshippers of God have gone to their graves with a lying viaticum. Those glorious periods of spiritual life which the religious history of men preserves, were fabulous; those blissful martyrdoms were mere obstinate ostentations; and the hard-earned conditions of devout habit and holy purpose, amounted to nothing, beyond inane sports of mystified feeling or blindly impassioned thought. All the holy words of God, if the Bible be not Inspired, are melted into air; the deep story of his love was but a novel, and the successive outbreaks from the sky, of the bow of mercy, of the destroying angel, of the evangelic choir, of the star of Bethlehem, of the voice of testimony to Jesus, are mere portents yet to be explained and never to be repeated. Alas for us! to what cruel prodigies has the spirit of modern research come, that i should stretch its wand over our holy city, the New Jerusalem of God, and cause it to pass away as the transient but gorgeous mirage. Farewell, if the Scriptures be not Inspired, to all those seraphic eras of ineffable light, when the life of man was drawn far upwards to heaven, and the love and secrets of God leaped down from the skies to tabernacle with men, and left a long wake of glory that yet lingers in their train. Adieu to the blissful morn-

ing of the world's spiritual life, when those strong and sinewy sons of God, Abraham and Jacob, Job and Hobab, were wont, at break of day, to wrestle with angels, and to commune at Peniel or Nebo, with Jehovah-jireh, till the rapt spirit of man almost forgot the flesh, and time, space, and material nature seemed all to be absorbed in God. And farewell to the victor bands of Hebrew pilgrims in the wilderness, wending their slow but sure way to Canaan, ever and anon chaunting the sad dirges of the house of Egyptian bondage, but whose joyous chorus was the *triumphal* of the Red sea. Farewell to that mystic and long hereditary line of busy priesthood, that in Judah, for fourteen hundred years devoutly shed the blood of lambs as a piacular confession of the tainted earth, and of the growing and advancing Shiloh; and to the still more strange and impassioned line of prophets, who twirled the chords of Judah's lyre till they vibrated in wild symphonies with the rugged fate of nations inebriated with the wrath of God; or to those generations of holy women who rose sublimely above the costly idols of their sex, and whose beauty was the undying lustre of their soul, whose amulets were the time-tried promises of God, whose only jewels were their valiant sons and fair daughters, brought up in early reverence to the law. Adieu to that oft-repeated age of martyrs, when faith was so strong, and love so fervent, that the servants of God would not accept deliverance, but preferred a resurrection to life, to the amplest share of mundane opulence and fame. Aye, and farewell too, to that foundation of adamant for Christianity which the Hebrew church had so patiently and so deeply laid; and in short, to all faith in history; to every charming tradition of primeval times; to epochs of miracles, and places of sanctity; to the dreams of seers, in which God made to pass before them the parturient future, and the hidden lore of the past; to Levite scholarship, and synagogal homilies; and to everything that we or our fathers were fain to consider, certain as the glittering of the Pleiades, or the flow of the tides, or the change of the moon.

But why all this mournful valediction to the treasures

we have so long loved? Oh, a new race of Teutons and Corybantes has arisen that knows not Joseph and the patriarchs; a sesquipedalian cohort of bearded strangers to our altar, armed with critical scymitar, dirk, and scythe, and rude hatchets with which they notch our oaks and fell our cedars; men who prostitute scholarship to the uses of theorizing and verbal merchandise, and who treat the oracles of God with no greater a reverence than they would a story of Goody Two-Shoes, and who hew open the ark of the covenant, with as fierce hands as if they only clove the clumps of a forest. Leap out of your hiding-places ye truly scholastic men of God of all churches, and come to the rescue! Semler and Eichorn, De Wette, and Parker, with Strauss, Havernich, and Hegsternberg, have flung down the gauntlet, and challenge us to do battle for our Inspired Canon; and we owe it to the Word of the Lord to avenge it from insult by showing that *each of its books bears the divine impress*, and that the Israel of God has ever been as punctilious in its care of what was first received as law, as it is able to prove, that what was so consecrated is still worthy of all acceptance. And while all of us who have ever so small a meed of talent for this revision and defence of what we hold to be Inspired, discharge our duty with precautions veracity, we can safely trust, that He who Inspired Bezaleel to carve, to cast, to emboss, and to design, for the sanctuary, will raise up adequate workmen to put to silence the erudite sappers, who neither care to leave us a stem of Jesse's rod, nor a root to the evangelic tree of life.



FOURTH LECTURE.

"IF THE SCRIPTURES BE INSPIRED, WE MUST POSSESS ALL THE EVIDENCE OF THEIR INSPIRATION THAT THE DIVINE BEING CONSIDERED BECOMING TO HIMSELF, AND NECESSARY TO OUR FAITH."

"That ye may be mindful of the words that were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."—2 Peter iii, 2.

Much as a portion of the world in our days seems disposed to repudiate the writings to which we give the title "the Scriptures" as Inspired productions, it cannot be because men do not believe in the theory of Inspiration at all, or that they deny that men ever were Inspired. For let but a poet of the order of our Milton arise, who, from a few hints of Scripture, and a small number of tenebrious traditions of moral history, creates an imperishable epic, the scene of which is laid in the true Terra del Fuego, far beyond the confines of mortal strife, and in which epic the poet brings from his opulent realms of thought the fallen cherubim, glittering in burnished chains and asbestos fire, or human nature new chiselled from the hands of God, without flaw, stain, or conceivable defect, or nature such as she was when her winds were all zephyrs, and her scenes virgin loveliness, and all her creatures one huge amphitheatre of vital harmony, and

the glowing reader starts up in rapture from the luscious pages of perhaps a blind pedagogue, and exclaims, "He must have been Inspired!" Or let a Michael Angelo arise with a genius for sculpture, and hew out of the brittle marble a group of soldiers surprised as they were bathing in the Arno, and exhibit in their statuary substance, every attitude of surprise, alarm, indignation, or courage, and every propriety of swollen muscle or excited feature, even to the most transient and beautiful emotions that ever flit across the human countenance, and the gazer, wrapt in delight, as he retires from the marble block that he can never forget, exclaims, "Michael Angelo was Inspired!" Or let but a German peasant, wild, impulsive, and by turns of ecstatic and hypochondriacal life, with a natural passion for music, appear, and discover that his soul is familiar with all the resources of the world of melody, and that whether for a bridal feast, or a military parade, or a comic scene, in grand hymns for the church, or in dirges for the house of mourning, the fame of Mozart must live as long as our ideas of harmony; for he shot, as the musical rocket of his age, far above all preceding masters of the vocal or instrumental art; and in composing a requiem for a beloved wife, outlusted himself, and prepared for his own corpse such a composition, that the enchanted masses of men conclude, that he who could thus make the trumpet more awful than thunder, and the harpsichord wail like bereaved woman, or the organ reach sweetest altitudes of unknown sentiments, must have been Inspired. Or let a peasant, without the advantages of education, or of extensive acquaintance with the world, invent a machine, as did Arkwright, that forthwith stimulated the northern districts of the country into unparalleled activity; found employment for millions, before whom stood, in hideous prospective, a life of semi-starvation; turning the bogs and barren hills of Lancashire and Yorkshire into crowded cities; multiplying the resources of the state, and the ships of the sea; giving a value to the weeds of South America and India, far, indeed, transcending that of the mines of Peru; and withal, bringing whole

nations to a higher state of intelligence and religious life; or one destroying the difficulties of distance, by increasing the speed of travelling from six or eight, to thirty or forty miles an hour; or one who covers the civilized world with the telegraphic wires; and even thoughtful reflectors can scarcely restrain themselves from confessing that these inventors must have been, in a degree, Inspired.

Now what is the reason that when men thus behold any prodigious elevation of the intellect, either in the purity of its conceptions, or the novelty of its creative forms; any touching beauty of character, or of pictorial material, or any vast excoitations of the lucid, the obvious, or the pertinent truth from few and latent hints; or any approach to the prophetic; or any rare perspicacity into the hidden depths of thought; that in all languages it is immediately attributed to Inspiration? What, I say, is the cause, that men who deny the Inspiration of the books of Scripture, so generally call our bard of Avon, the author of Waverley, the great inventor of the steam engine, the orator that moulds nations to his will, or the maker of songs and systems, "Inspired?" Is it not plain that universal reason has a kind of intuitive faith in Inspiration, and that she considers the human soul can only attain to its highest state by special assistance from God?

We have endeavoured to show you that the Old Testament is an Inspired volume, because it contains a large quantity of matter that is super-rational, and ante-historic, as well as predictive; that the writers of the sacred books were not only pious men who would not deceive, but too competent judges of what they recorded to have been themselves deceived; that while many of them only professed to record the very words they had received from Jehovah, others were accredited to mankind by the possession of miraculous powers; and that the Bible, from its construction and tendency, if not divinely attested, could never have been received as the law of God by the Jews; and in addition, that both Christ and his apostles recognised the divine authority of the Old Testament, and quoted it in illustration and confirmation of their own instructions

more than five hundred times. We have also shown that if the apostles were not Inspired they were deceived, and that Christ could not be a true prophet; for he had promised, before his death, that the Spirit of God should come upon them after his departure from the earth, and guide them into all truth, and abide with them for ever, and that he should bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had taught them; and by comparing the post-Pentecost lives of the apostles with these predictions of Christ, we found them verified in a most miraculous manner. We have, then, proved to you that if the Scriptures be not Inspired documents, there is no alternative but to regard them as forgeries. In the course of these addresses we have glanced at various aspects of the question of Inspiration, and endeavoured to show you the kind of proof that is only applicable to the subject; but while we have repudiated the presumption of attempting fully to explain the modes of Inspiration, we have not deprecated any fair investigations of reason, however searching; we have also shown that any merely metaphysical exposition of the theory of Inspiration must necessarily be inconclusive; and that if the books of Scripture be not Inspired, we are in no better a moral condition than the pagans either of ancient or modern times.

To all this variety of proof that we do not receive the Scriptures as the oracles of God on insufficient grounds, it is replied by some, that the books of Scripture are very ancient and extraordinary compositions; but if they be Inspired, we have not sufficient evidence that they are so. It is, therefore, now our duty to show, not only that the Bible is Inspired, but that "*we must possess all the evidence of its Inspiration that the Divine Being considered becoming to himself, and necessary to our faith.*" We have, now, to solicit your patient attention to the manner in which the proof of this proposition works out. Let us, however, glance first at the materials of which the Scriptures are composed. The contents of Scripture may be classified into five great divisions of subject:—

I. The historic portions.

II. Messages from Jehovah to particular men, cities, or nations.

III. Predictions.

IV. Doctrinal portions of the Scriptures.

V. Biographical sketches of good and evil men.

We will not expatiate much on the particulars of this classification, but some attention is due to it as the basis of what is to follow. Out of the whole books of Scripture, twenty-two are either entirely or for the most part historic. Some Christians have an aversion to historic discourses; but they are either such as have never given themselves the trouble to understand the immense and superlative value of historic instruction; or such as have been prepossessed, by an injudicious course of ministerial teaching, to regard the Gospel in so circumscribed a view, that they are unwilling to listen to anything beyond the promises and the doctrines of the New Testament. Such is not the view, however, held by the more general believers in Christ; and certainly this is not the tendency of the intelligent part of the world. It may, at first sight, appear remarkable to some, that so large a portion as three-fifths of the whole book of Revelation should be historic. There must be reasons for this, worthy of both God and man; and those reasons, in our judgment, are important to be known and are not far to seek. It requires very little reflection to perceive that history is the foundation of all morality,—which expression it is necessary to explain. Man's obligations to God arise from his being his workmanship, and God's claims upon man are primarily founded upon that fact. But some of man's duties to God arise from the favors which He has successively bestowed on him, from the innumerable instances in which the Divine Being has interposed to save men from ruin, as well as from the originally glorious institution of the human family in Paradise. It is our duty, our policy, and our bliss to love God, and in that love we cannot go to excess. But we are not all able to reason out, either accurately or deeply, man's moral duties to his Creator from our acknowledged relations to him as the kindler of our spirit, or the

potter of our clay. We are more deeply moved by considering tangible proofs of the beneficence of Jehovah, than by abstract reasonings either of his nature or of our own. The true intellect, that is versed in recondite courses of argumentation, must feel God's claim on its adoration, its love, and its obedience. But how much more forcibly even minds of that class feel the claims of God, when, step by step, they trace the stream of his goodness from the dawn of creation to the present, and observe how all time has made good the assertion, that "like as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear him." Man is a historic creature. He was not always as wise or as ignorant, as weak in some things, as strong in others, as he is now; he was not always a sinner; and there was a time when, if he wept at all, it was only from the over-flowings of his joy; or if he sighed, it was merely to help the full heart to express the inward heaven of its delighted emotions. But we must not now allow imagination to speak. Man fell: and they are not vain enquiries that the pondering heart makes, Whether God did all that became Him at the fall? Had he previously warned man, and entitled himself to our absolute confidence? And did he, when the dire calamity befell our race, act with wisdom and dignity, with commiserate justice and equitable benignity? Did he temper punishment with hope, and forestall a greater ruin by making use of man's sufferings to restore him to perfection? And from the day that Adam and Eve were driven from Paradise, has God graciously watched over the race, and at fitting opportunities sent it instructions and new proofs of his love? When the world became populous, and wickedness had not only increased but become refined, did God, for any period, however short, abandon man, or forget to fulfil his promises, or withhold the aid of his Spirit? To these important questions, you perceive, *history alone* can reply; and this is one reason why so large a portion of the Bible is historic.

History is the most effective vehicle for the communication of moral instruction. An abstract argument, sepa-

rated from all the material of time, space, and person, is to some natures, exquisitely delightful, and almost the only form in which truth powerfully affects the judgment. But such are only a minute fraction of mankind. The masses either do not understand, or will not attend to, or cannot profit by, abstract argumentation. A few only understand an immaterial argument on patriotism; but where will you find a man who does not feel the whole story of the patriot-love in Hamilcar swearing young Hannibal, at the altar of his gods, never to make peace with the Romans? Coke has reasoned gloriously on the incorruptibility that becomes a judge; but how much better is the same truth taught by the fall of Lord Bacon for receiving bribes? An abstract theory of parental love is very easy to construct, and not incomprehensible to the masses; but how much more impressive the thing becomes when we hear of a father, who, being a magistrate, had to condemn his son for a violation of the law to the loss of his eyes; but out of the conflicting duties of parent and judge, nobly extricated himself by losing one of his own eyes, that his son might be spared a part of the penalty! How many of our finest writers have attempted to describe maternal love by mere abstract words and laboured descriptions; but how far are the best of these surpassed by that incident in the life of Solomon, where he judges between the true and the false mother of the disputed child! We all know that childhood is one of the important though unrecognised teachers of the world, but how vividly is that truth brought home to our convictions by the history of the "little Syrian maid." We now see why so large a measure of our Saviour's teaching was issued in the historic form. We may forget some even of his profound sentences, but who, that once heard them, can ever forget the Prodigal Son, the Widow of two mites, Lazarus and Dives, or the Judge that feared not God and regarded not man?

History is also the most unexceptionable demonstrator and witness of facts that we can possess. Men are led astray by the pomp of names, by the speciousness of fine

words, by the bias of interest, by the force of custom, by the league of party, and by the illusions of fancy; but history has no prejudices. Its lessons are clear and brief, and repeated with every advantage of illustrative variation. From the best of mortal but uninspired teachers, it is, perhaps, impossible totally to sever the fear that they may be deceived, and may have unintentionally deceived us; or from the want of attention, or the decay of memory, or the change of feeling, we may suspect our teachers of going far astray. But we cannot suspect the teachings of History, which are slow in their formation, but lucid, if tardy; and even when imperfect, what history does teach, it teaches as the subordinate voice of God, as the highest wisdom of experience, and as the concentrated testimony of the thought of the whole human race. Now it is in this form that many of the best teachings of the Bible present themselves to us. Of this class is the truth implied in the memorable words of the Mosaic law, "Be sure your sin will find you out;" or this, "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished;" or "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" or, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love;" or "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner;" or, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Now of all these propositions of Scripture, history is full of the most veracious and illustrative instances.

But there is another important aspect of the historic portion of the Scriptures which requires to be considered. Imagine for a moment that you have Paul's letters without the history of his conversion, and his devotedness to the cause of Christ. It would be immediately said that they were improbable, and therefore not Inspired; for, a short time previously, Paul was a zealous Pharisee. Or suppose the four Evangelists had perished, or not been written, but we still read in the Epistles that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that Jesus was able to save to the uttermost all that came to God by him. You see at once that the buttress would be gone! The

ideal flower of Christianity might be beautiful as now, but without its roots of facts it must have died. Or suppose the biographic notes of the evangelic portion of Scripture were obliterated, then where should we look for those models of good and bad character, that are so fundamentally influential in the formation of our own? Or again, imagine the historic part of the Pentateuch lost, and that nothing is extant, but the law,—civil, ceremonial, and moral; who would not ask,—and ask in a pain-filled heart—to what people were these laws first given, and how do we know that they really received laws from God, and that these are they? Thus almost every view we can take of this subject shows the verification obtained by making so large a portion of the Bible historic. The bearing of this on the question of Inspiration will appear shortly.

If the importance of the historic section of the Bible be thus manifest, it is obvious that to attain its end that section must be *Inspired*, or free from doctrinal error. But why need it be Inspired? Is it not enough that we know it to be true, without knowing it to be vouched by Inspiration? Perhaps that would be enough, if man had absolute faith in human testimony, but all things prove he has not. We believe in the general truth of Tacitus' and Cæsar's histories; but we do not so believe in them that we would risk either our health or our property on their veraciousness; and we should not be surprised if other histories should be discovered that would shew Cæsar to have been only a vain-glorious partisan, and Tacitus, for the most part, a mere novelist. We believe in Sharon Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons, or Irving's Voyages of Columbus; but we only believe in them in such a manner, that if other books were to arise with more probable stories, we should adopt them; and be prepared also to deal with them in a similar mode, if they too should be superseded. Now such a faith as this in the historic basis of our religion is altogether insufficient. Our faith in religious truth, whether taught in a historical, a dogmatic, or a predictive form, must be absolute, or it is nothing.

We have already shown that man has no absolute faith in mere human testimony, and, in the present state of human nature, can have none; if, therefore, the historic part of the Scriptures be not Inspired, we are without a solid basis for our religion, for it all depends on history. Now arises the important query, how are we to prove that this historic part of Scripture is really so Inspired? than which it is impossible to start a graver enquiry. We reply, men of God, empowered to work miracles, would not fabricate fictitious histories; nor could men of eminently religious character; nor such as were endowed with prophetic gifts. *Now of one or other of these classes were all the historic writers of the Scriptures.* Add to these considerations the facts that they are justly considered as historians of the first quality, because they were eye-witnesses; and though living at great distances of time from each other, they all harmonise. And tremendous as the consequences of a mistake in this matter would be, my reason calmly feels that, in placing its absolute faith in such documents as the historic portions of Scripture, I rather believe in God, than can be said to trust chiefly in man.

Prolix as I may appear to some on this section of the subject, I beseech you to admit yet another consideration on the historic portion of the Inspired books. I have reminded you that of the entire books of Scripture twenty-two are almost entirely historical; and important fragments of history are to be found scattered through the prophetic section of the Bible, as well as even in such compositions as the Psalms, Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Now I wish to impress upon you by what kind of historians these books were written, for the value of history always depends mainly on the character of the historian himself. Before you can fully form your opinion on this matter, it will be necessary to remember that a historian ought to be an inflexible lover of truth,—to have faculties adequate to his task,—to possess the best opportunities of forming a correct judgment,—not to be under the sway of avarice, prejudice, ambition, or a love of fame,—and to have sufficient courage for his toil. That a historian, to entitle himself to cre-

dence, ought to possess these attributes, will surely require no proof. But historians of even the highest repute in general literature, only possess a part of these qualities; and I would solicit your attention to the following scale of historians, which I have drawn up to facilitate your judgment of how far the Inspired writers of the historic parts of Scripture are deserving of our absolute confidence, since they transcend the very highest class of secular historians.

All Historians may be thus arranged:—

Class 1.—Those historians who were men of undoubted religious character, of adequate abilities and courage, having a perfect knowledge of their theme, and who were eye-witnesses of what they record, and had no secular interest to promote by writing. Such were only the sacred writers, for profane history cannot produce a single historian with all these attributes.

Class 2.—Such as had all the qualifications I have just named for the office of historian, but who were *neither eyewitnesses nor contemporaries* of the events they narrate; as Eusebius.

Class 3.—Such as were men of respectable character, and contemporary with the events, but destitute of the requisite ability either clearly to comprehend or to record their subjects. Such were Pliny and Herodotus, for the most part, and our own Stowe.

Class 4.—Those who were contemporary, and had adequate abilities, but lacked the requisite moral character to be faithful historians; as Clarendon and Voltaire.

Class 5.—Such as were only of moderate character, and good abilities, but did not take adequate pains with their materials; as Tacitus.

Class 6.—Such as were excellent writers, but were neither contemporary, nor had sufficient knowledge of their subject; as Gibbon and Whitaker.

Class 7.—Those who were of good character, but of inferior abilities, and drew their information from defective, uncertain, and disputed sources; as Bingham.

Class 8.—Those who were not of high character, nor of

adequate understanding, who lived remotely from the times and events, and depended only on precarious sources of information; as Cobbet in his History of the Reformation, and Hume.

Class 9.—Such as were of moderate character and abilities, but had great secular advantages to gain by the composition of their history; as Walker's History of the Sufferings of the Clergy, and Lingard.

Class 10.—Such as were not conspicuous for moral character, nor in possession of the best means of information, nor diligent in the use of their materials, and merely composed histories to promote their own emolument or fame, or to serve the party to which they belonged.

Let us now look at the bearing of this classification of the graduated credence due to historians on the sacred writers; and I have deceived myself if this will not show you that Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul take the very highest rank as historians. This is most important, because the world has been accustomed to treat these sacred writers as authors who stood in great need of indulgent lenity, and who were thought by no means to be compared with its great historians,—Herodotus, Xenophon, Caesar, Guicciardini, Voltaire, Robertson, and Hume. We turn the tables on the world, and reply to it, "All your lauded historians are incapable of claiming rank in the higher classes of historic authorship, for they were either defective in character, in judgment, in a want of materials, in not being eye-witnesses or contemporaries; and many of them were confessedly warped by the bias of party, the lust of fame, or the love of gold. On the other hand, let worldly men remember these sacred historians, whom they have been accustomed to despise, or to treat with supercilious toleration, all belonged only to the first grades of historic authorship; and that in addition, they wrought miracles, and predicted events that have been fulfilled.

Of the historic events in the last four books of the

Pentateuch, Moses was an eye-witness, a contemporary, a co-actor in every movement; and in addition, he uttered predictions that have long been fulfilled, and wrought miracles which are vouched for in the legendary stories of all the old nations; to which we may add, his piety was unquestionable, for it would have been to his worldly interest to have remained at the court of Pharoah, and disowned his Hebrew connections.

Joshua, the writer of the book that bears his name, was not only approved by Moses, but he was a person of singular piety, an eye-witness of the facts he records, himself a worker of miracles, who neither enriched himself nor his family by his history, and whose veracity has never been impeached.

Samuel was a man of distinguished excellence, and of simple manners, who both uttered predictions and wrought miracles, was an eye-witness and contemporary with most of the events he has narrated, and if the book of Judges be attributable to him, he had the best possible sources whence to draw his information.

Of Ezra and Nehemiah, the former a priest and the latter a person of distinguished family, both, however, exiles in Babylon, less is known; but sufficient to warrant our affirmation that though neither of them either wrought miracles or delivered prophecy, so far as we know, they were of eminent piety and adequate courage, and were eye-witnesses of the things they record. Ezra possessed the confidence of Cyrus and Artaxerxes; and both he and his successor were venerated for their piety, and their incorruptible integrity, even by the people whose disorders they severely reprobated.

Of the five historians of the New Testament,—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul,—three of them were persons who were invested with miraculous power, and John and Paul foretold events that have since verified their prophecies; while Mark and Luke, though not themselves apostles, were the associates of Peter and Paul for many years; and the whole of them were eye-witnesses of a considerable portion of the subjects of their histories, were

men of eminent piety, and suffered greatly on account of their adherence to the cause of Jesus Christ.

These facts, therefore, prove beyond all doubt, that the historical writers of the Scriptures were historians of the highest class, combining a greater number of the pre-requisites which the office of historian demands, than can be found in any other authors in non-inspired literature. Take any ten of the best historians of antiquity, or of modern times, and examine their claims to credence by the scale which has been now described, and it will be found, that while the sacred writers do not profess to compete with any other historians, they far transcend all that the world can produce. These facts, corroborated by Pagan and independent Jewish literature, so far as they exist, establish the credibility of the sacred historic books, and I now return to their Inspiration.

We have already shown that history is, and must be, the foundation of all religion, and that it is especially so of the Jewish and Christian schemes; that God commanded Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, to mention no others, to write; and that it is presumable that those historians who had still more important facts to record, received also a divine mandate. The purpose of the Divine Being in committing the sacred history of the world to writing, must have been to preserve it for the use of posterity. But to that posterity even such histories would be comparatively useless, unless they could be regarded as infallible records; for we cannot place implicit confidence in mere dogmatic teaching, however lucid, elevated, or beautiful, unless it be corroborated by a continuous correspondent history from the beginning of the world. And from all these considerations I infer, and have a right to infer, that the historic part of Scripture was so produced, under divine guidance, as to be free from all material error, or, in other words, to be Inspired.

II. As to that portion of the Scriptures which consists of *direct and special messages from God* to individuals or to particular societies, there is less difficulty to contend with, for we have but few points to settle. Did God send

these messages?—By whom?—Were the messages faithfully reduced to writing? These messages are chiefly to be found in the predictive compositions of the Bible, are easy of investigation, and may be enumerated and classified; and to the fitness of the messages themselves, the history and condition of those periods will vouch at once all the requisite proof.

Let us concentrate our attention on a few instances. The first that we shall select is that to the Ninevites, entrusted to Jonah 862 years before the time of Christ. A multitude of reckless critics have endeavoured to denude the history of Jonah of every attribute of the supernatural, by representing his Ninevan mission as a myth, a dream, an allegory, or a legend; but the irrational theories to which they resort would impose on us far more difficulties than to give credit to the simple narrative which, you will remember is substantially corroborated by Jesus Christ. The irresolute, uncongenial, and turbid spirit of the prophet, who, perhaps, hated the Ninevites as foreigners, and scorned to exercise his prophetic office among the uncircumcised, finely contrasts with the mercifulness, the serene justice, and the parental forbearance of Jehovah. Now, was a message like this probable or improbable?—Are the descriptive facts of this famous Assyrian metropolis in harmony with the testimony of independent historians? Are the topical references to the sea coast of Judea and the port of Tarshish, borne out by later but by pagan geographers or not? Two miraculous facts attend the history of this mandate of God to the men of Nineveh; and if I read the prospects of the time aright, in a few years those precious slabs that have been recently deposited in our Museum will yield that corroborative testimony which will fill our mouths with exultation, and those of the opponents of the Inspired books with fire. Three distinct messages were sent by Jehovah through Isaiah to Hezekiah. The first is recorded in chapter xxxvii, 21–35, and refers to the discomfiture of Sennacherib, whose overpowering and disciplined forces were then about Jerusalem: the second, preserved in chapter xxxviii, 5, respects the preternatural

continuation of Hezekiah's own life for fifteen years: and the third, stated in chapter xxxix, 3-8, alludes to the Babylonian captivity of portions of the Hebrew nation. At least one miraculous occurrence is connected with the history of these messages. In the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah the prophet records a remarkable message from Jehovah to the famous Cyrus, king of Persia, but not born till two hundred and ten years after the delivery of this prediction of a part of his history. In our judgment this is one of the most extraordinary speeches that Heaven ever addressed to the earth. Isaiah tells us repeatedly that he was commanded to write his predictions; and we have it on good authority, that the perusal of this particular document by Cyrus, whose attention was drawn to it by one of the illustrious Hebrew captives in Babylon, became the determining motive to liberate that people, and to restore them to the land of their fathers, between whose religion and the monotheistic magianism that then prevailed in Persia, there was a far greater agreement than could be found in any other of the forms of old paganism. This message is its own authentication, and was designed by Jehovah to be the procuring cause of that restoration of his captive people to Palestine, of which he had so repeatedly spoken through the prophets; and it is vastly augmented in certitude by comparing the life of this noble chieftain, as recorded either by Herodotus, Xenophon, or Ctesias, though none of them are, according to our standard, historians of the first class. Passing over, however, the messages of God by Jeremiah to Moab, Tyre, Zidon, and Ammon, respecting their different fates, as recorded in his twenty-seventh chapter, the messages to the Hebrew captives scattered through the new Babylonian cities, and that to Pharaoh related in the thirty-first chapter of the same prophet, I call your attention to the seven remarkable communications which John, the surviving apostle, was ordered to convey to the famous Asiatic churches, and which he has preserved in the initial part of the Apocalypse. Now, as a considerable part of those messages was prophetic, and therefore altogether out of the reach

of mere intellect, of whatever acumen, there is no escaping from the conviction that John must have been Inspired for their delivery ; and the proof that he was so, is to be found in the strange harmony that subsists between the subsequent history of those churches and the terms of the admonitory predictions as delivered by the apostles.

III. Neither does the prophetic portion of the Bible require from us any lengthened notice at the present time. The case is simple, for the prophecies can be counted from Genesis to the Apocalypse ; and it is no difficult thing to show that these prophecies were delivered so long before the events, that no perspicacity could have foreseen them ; and the proofs of their exact fulfilment profane history itself demonstrates.

What proofs, then, have we that the prophetic parts of Scripture are the virtual productions of the mind of God ? Mr. Martineau, in his flippant subtlety, said, some time ago, "A man may be filled with the Holy Ghost, and yet not be infallible ;" and, of course, he would say as much of an Inspired book ; but we of ordinary understanding have no demur, to admit that the man who predicts what events fulfil is entitled to be considered "a teacher sent from God." Excluding from consideration, for the present, the minor prophets, let us glean cursorily, for a few minutes, through the vision-fields of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and learn what kind of corn has grown on their hallowed furrows. We must reserve, for some separate investigation, the foreshadowings of the prophets that relate to the person, the time, and the results of the Messiah. But we cannot afford to let you go unreminded that Isaiah foretold the calamities of Judah in such terms and times as were most improbable of verification : of the defeat of Ahaz, by the Assyrians, and of the capture of Syria by the same marauders. Remote as the captivity was in the time of the prophet, he even predicts the fact, and the means of the Jews' return. He foretold the overthrow of Babylon in so circumstantial a manner, that the prophecy rather appears to have been the history of an eye-witness : of Moab, and its restoration within forty years ; the destruc-

tion of the Ethiopic power; of the commotions of Egypt; of the total subjugation of Tyre and of Sidon, then in their palmy state; of the rise of John the Baptist, as the herald of Messiah, and the spread of Christ's religion among the remotest and least civilised islanders then known. Jeremiah, though less copious and brilliant than Isaiah, is not less fecund in dealing forth the predicted destinies of men. He foretold the return of the Israelites from captivity, into which many of them had not entered; the manner in which Nebuchadnezzar would be foiled in his siege of Jerusalem; the destruction of Zedekiah; the annihilation of the Babylonian power, and the period that should intervene before that catastrophe would occur; the conquest of Egypt by Babylon; the defeat of Pharaoh's army on the Euphrates; the reduction of the Phoenicians; the castigation of Moab and Ammon, and their subsequent resuscitation; the fall of the powers of Edom, Damascus, and Kedar; and the temporary ruin of Elam.

The gorgeous and cathartic Ezekiel, the man of many of the deepest and most sublime visions through which Deity has addressed himself to mortals, is chiefly circumscribed to the affairs of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, but concurs with his prophetic brethren in foreshadowing what awaited Babylon, Philistia, the Tyrian and Sidonian states, some of the ports of the Mediterranean, the cities of Assyria, and the proud Egypt, or the insignificant Seir. But when we come to Daniel, who lived before the birth of Christ 530 years, we seem to have got out of the shadowy jungles of prophecy into the open plains and sunlight of a man who read dreams with facility, rendered the elate behests of the Babylonian ethnarch ineffective and innocuous, and painted in gigantic fresco the four great monarchies of antiquity, under the symbols of hierophantic animals, and curtly showed how the golden plains of Dura would be ranged by the bear of Shushan; how the Macedonian goat would overpower the Cyrian dynasty, and how the ruthless Roman would sweep away the realms of the world-subduing son of Philip of Macedon. And this Daniel, who entered the Babylonian territory a youth,

bound by the neck and hand to others in the drove of new-made and heart-broken slaves, rose still higher in prophetic lustre, and described, in glowing terms and fixed numbers, the office, the person, the end, and the result of long-expected Shiloh's visit to the holy city of Jerusalem. Other prophets drew from the divine oracle corroborative visions, and they contain some that are peculiar to themselves, making, altogether, inclusive of the Apocalypse of John, a proportion little if at all less than the four gospels, and all the epistles. Of the Inspiration of this prophetic part of Scripture the proof is almost epigrammatic. If the prophecies were fulfilled, and uttered at or about the dates to which they are usually assigned, both by Jew and Gentile, the men that uttered them were moved by the Holy Ghost; for "prophecy came not in *any* time by the will of man." If these prophecies had their roots in the Jewish system, and their fulfilment in the Evangelical one, then both are true, and the highest "testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." If God never "spake in time past by the prophets unto the fathers" he has no right either to be loved, worshipped, or trusted in the world; for we were "hungry, and he gave us no food; thirsty, and he gave us no drink; naked, and he clothed us not; sick and in prison, and he visited us not," if the books of Scripture be not Inspired; which, for our part, we are as certain of their being, as that woman ever loved her child, or her child to gambol. If God be not the author of the prophetic parts of the Scriptures, prefaced as they are with the solemn declaration "Thus spake the Lord," what are we to think of the characters of the prophets, who, in many hundred instances, explicitly declared they were only delivering what Jehovah had spoken to them? for instead of holy men of God who spake as they were moved from above, they traded on the credulity of mankind, and foisted off their own conceits as the verdicts of heaven. But there still remains the crowning proof of their literal fulfilment. Out, then, upon the sacrilegious crew, of whatever nation, or dialect, or pretensions, or scholarship, that would steal from us our Pentateuch, and put in its place

a worthless cosmogony of Manetho, tinkered, perhaps, by De Wette; and who, for the Evangelists, would give us verbose speculations or transcendental theories of human nature, that have seethed long in the revolutionary cauldrons of bewildered Germany and voltaic France; and who would supply the place of the ripe and magnificent Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John, with the ephemeral hallucinations of Romanticist themists.

IV. We now come to enquire what proofs there are that the doctrinal parts of the Scriptures are Inspired? I plead to an intention of using the term doctrinal here in its widest sense; including, not only that portion of the Bible which is more strictly dogmatic, but also those which are rather developments of the Scripture doctrines, than dogmatical themselves; as the Psalms, and some of the Epistles of the New Testament. The dogmatic teachers of the Scriptures appear to be, Moses, David, Solomon, the author of Job, and the sixteen prophets, with our Lord, and those eight disciples who have left us written documents; the gross number being twenty-nine. There is doubtless much doctrinal instruction to be gleaned from the historic parts of the Word of God; but that must stand or fall by the evidence for Inspiration which those books can maintain for themselves. Have we, then, adequate proof that these doctrinal portions of Scripture were primarily derived from God; that their first communication was attended with irrefutable evidence of their celestial origination; that they were such as reason could not have discovered, or have established in human belief without especial signs from God; that such portions of the doctrinal teachings of Scripture as are developments of truths priorly known, were legitimately deduced; and that these doctrinal teachings were correctly recorded in permanent writing? Important as all these enquiries are, we, after some fear, much doubt, and many years' investigation, are confident that we may answer in the affirmative.

True doctrines are the only legitimate basis of just laws. Where there is no law there is no transgression, nor can there be any certain virtue. Moral law, then, is

essential to the divine government of the world, and true doctrines are indispensable prerequisites of law. We thus arrive at the fact that Jehovah depends, for the reclamation of his sinful family of man, on true doctrines. The enemies of Inspiration do not profess to have discovered truer doctrines than those of the Scriptures. But if Jehovah's government morally depend on the doctrines on which he has based it, how can He ever expect that his creatures, who have no absolute faith in their own reasonings, or their opinions, will receive as certain even the doctrines of Scripture, unless they be accompanied with a guarantee that they are infallible? Nothing can make us feel the certainty of the doctrines, but the proofs that they were originally Inspired; and nothing can become such proof, unless it resolve itself into the testimony of the senses, be in harmony with those intuitive truths which all minds receive without argumentation, and be fortified by such historic evidence as excludes all possibility of fraud, collusion, or mistake. Such proof we believe exists for the dogmatic portions of the Holy Records.

We have a right to expect that the doctrinal teachings of Scripture should be harmonious, even though some of the authors lived more than twelve hundred years asunder, and in totally changed conditions of the human race. The teachings of no one finite mind are perfectly harmonious, for this plain reason,—that we only attain truth progressively, and often for a long period embrace errors, till further discoveries have corrected our mistakes. But one day is with the Lord as a thousand years; in Him knowledge is all intuitive and not progressive; and His teachings, therefore, will always be homogenous,—but man's, never. Examine the instructions of any uninspired human teacher, of any school, on any subject, and at *every* period of the world, and you will not find a single instance of perfect agreement, if those teachings have been progressively delivered. But here are twenty-nine moral teachers, all diverse in outward circumstance, and in locality and time as divergent as possible, and yet you find them progres-

sively harmonious;—a harmony that becomes still more remarkable since the dogmatic developments of the New Testament are so novel, expansive, and complicate. This to our judgment, is one of the most forcible evidences that the doctrinal parts of Scripture were written under the superintendance of the Spirit of God, or, in other words, were Inspired.

But it may be enquired, If these doctrinal teachings be from God, why should they be delivered in so great a variety of the forms of human composition,—some being given in proverbs, and others in poetry or in parables, while some only are preceptive, and others take the form of admonition or hortatory counsel? In condescension to our weakness, and to adapt divine teachings to the aptitudes of the human heart, was doubtless the reason for this variety in the modes of enunciating the words of life. Some minds are most moved by preceptive indoctrination, but those of less reading are soonest won by a parable; and while youth loves to learn through the types of poetic beauty, age delights to ponder apothegms. Sorrow learns rapidly from the doctrines of consolation; and the busy world, that cannot be instructed with elaborated excogitations, comes to know the mind of the Spirit in the biographies of men who loved God in remote times, or of evil men who perished by their own hands, or were cast away upon the rocks of which they were too vain to beware. The Shasters of India, the Koran, and the Book of Mormon, also profess to be Inspired productions, but their one type of instructions for the diversities of human capacity and taste, would alone destroy their credit, even if their doctrines were true and their tendency holy.

V. We now come to the last division of the subjects of the Inspired books; viz., the biographical section. Precious as the verbal instructions of the Bible are to us, and will be to all the approaching ages of the faithful, the instructions by biographic model are, in some respects, still more valuable. Words are wonderful in tuitive force; they separate, in the fine words of Paul, "the joints and marrow," and penetrate those depths of the soul that

human eye never read, but where rebellious thought often attempts to hide from the All-seeing. But words are only words, and never can teach like example. The most striking description of friendship, in words, that I have ever read, is that of Dr. Maclaine, of Bath, the translator of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History; but we have only to turn to that finest picture of friendship in the life of David and Jonathan, to feel how immensely the teaching by biographic example outdoes the teaching by words. We have heard much of the tenderness and gratitude of penitent woman; and Spenser, and Moore, Roscommon, and Petrach, have attempted to describe those qualities of the feminine heart; but glowing as their words are, how are they cast into the shade by three sentences of the Evangelist, who describes that grateful and tender gratitude of the forgiven penitent, who had been a well-known sinner, but now "loved much because she had much forgiven." Here is the smitten heart made whole, speaking by a brief action to a hard world of proud unrighteousness; and a thousand artists have tried to copy that Hebrew Magdalene, but all have failed. Sad injustice indeed has hitherto been done to the biographical parts of the Scriptures by our great writers; they have overlooked the fact, that in those slight etchings of humanity by the hand of God, there is to be found such an assemblage of the vital parts of all good and evil character as mortal pen, however practised, could never achieve. In the Bible we have some hundreds of these biographic sketches, but there is no surplusage in any of them. All vice and all virtue may see the express likeness of their person in the portrait gallery of the Scriptures, more vividly and truthfully drawn than they can find them elsewhere. Would you behold perfect self-denial?—see the widow casting her two mites into the treasury. Or triumphant faith?—witness the Syrophoenician. Or do you long to find humility in a rich man?—come and gaze on the face of that centurion who exclaimed, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." Have you a wish to see the sinner pondering, when the arrows of the Almighty are drinking

up his vitals?—gaze upon the publican, whose vivacious effigy outlives all temples and all priesthoods. Would you see a sinner perishing in the pride of his self-righteous heart?—there is he, the turgid Pharisee, orating on the ample list of his conventional virtues,—further from God, although in his temple, than Sirius from the moon. Or do you wish to see young ambition?—it is there, in that disciple-group, caballing “which of them should be the greatest.” Or falsehood?—who can forget the stealthy Gehazi, or the self-foiling Ananias? In short, of what virtue or what vice may you not see, in the Bible, the compressed miniature! And why all this concentrated essence of biographic tuition, but that it might be an example to the flock. And thus the Spirit of God descends, in diverse manner, to instruct the world. Nor can we doubt that these are the productions of a wisdom more than mortal. Three men have become famous for their skill in describing character more graphically than others,—Plutarch, Bruyere, and Clarendon; but let any one compare the best of their portraits with the feeblest of Matthew's or even of Ezra's limnings, and say whether there can be a doubt that these untutored Hebrews have immeasurably transcended the terse Athenian, or the epigrammatic Hyde. I am a firm believer in the laws of mind, and the invariable results of cultivation; and in all countries I find the untutored writer always prolix in description, rude of taste, extravagant in metaphor, illogical in reasoning, prone to small conceits, always vulgar, and confused in narrative. How happens it, then, that if the sacred writers did not enjoy a spiritual succour in their compositions, that though many of them were not men of culture, all of them, in these biographic sketches, excel the far-famed masters of this difficult style of writing in every age? Admit the fact of their Inspiration, and the phenomenon is adequately explained; but if this be denied, then you have an intellectual anomaly to explain that unbelief has often striven in vain to expound, and not being able to elucidate, it has, in outrage of all the facts of history, boldly ascribed as an invention of a comparatively modern date.

You have now seen the evidence on which we ground our belief, producible from the five departments in the Inspired volume, and on which we have detained your thoughts perhaps too long. We would also remind you of the peculiar evidence furnished by the invariable powers of renovation with which the word of God operates in all who believe its doctrines and obey its precepts,—a prerogative peculiar to the words of the Bible alone. What more could be reasonably desired? If these proofs of Inspired qualities have been honestly sifted, and yet shown to be due to the writers of the Old and New Testaments, they ought to be sufficient, even though there should still be many difficulties, as there doubtless are, inseparable from the subject. But this file of proofs, we are told, is *not* sufficient; and that, strong as it may seem, something more lucid and cogent is required, to bring to the understanding of such objectors the conviction, that the writings of Scripture are the indisputable expositions of the will of God. Well, then, it is now our turn to cross-examine this fretful and anomalous spirit of unbelief, and to get to know what evidence more it would require before it will admit these records to be the true and the only light from heaven. And now, thou eccentric and pondering child of unbelief! enter the witness box, and tell us what ancient deeds thou hast seen, what counter miracles thou hast wrought, what hath God ever spoken by thee, when thou wert rapt to a higher heaven than Paul,—what more God-revealing symbols thou hast beheld than Moses, what deeper consciousness of the inward power of truth thou hast attained to than John, or from what point of more accurate view thou hast taken thy retrospect than did Jesus, of “all that the prophets have spoken,” that thou canst not, if thou wouldest, see the hand of God in the pages of Holy Writ? Nay, impassioned and wayward child! do not rave or anathematise, but reason and speak! What more evidence wouldest thou have? Perhaps thou hast been a disciple in the schools of Foxton, Hitzig, or Grimm, or perhaps of Herman Von der Hordt; or it may be thou hast lodged with Koester, and

confabulated often with Less, and studied exegetically with De Wette, or sat at the feet of Stäudlin and Strauss, and art thus become expert in the philosophy of unbelief, and skilful in the Pyrrhonic art of doubting all things? Well, thou deeply-read child of these many masters, say clearly of what further evidence thou art in quest, before thou canst take part with Moses and the prophets, and give credence that the words of Jesus and his apostles are infallible? But we will ask thee one question more,—By what authority dost thou set up thy judgment against that of all ecclesiastical testimony, both Hebrew and Gentile; and who gave thee authority to determine that the evidence we have is insufficient, and what proof would satisfy thee and all venturient generations?

This spirit of unbelief, the spokesman of so many teachers and tyros, has replied, at different times and in different modes, to our interrogations. It is difficult, however to construe what it has uttered; for though it rejects the "dark sayings of the harp" of Judah, it loves umbrageous expressions, and uses them fluently. It would have a proof of Inspiration "more in harmony with our consciousness," our "inward intuitions," our "subjective perceptiveness," our "introspective judgment," our "individual emotions," and our "psychologic laws!" Such is the jargon with which this unreasoning spirit of unbelief prates about the insufficiency of the proofs of Inspiration. These are anglo-germanic phrases of idealess rodomontade, and with them I will not attempt to reason. If there be any meaning in this knot of expressions, let it be translated into lucid English, or plain French, or grammatic Latin or Greek, or legitimate Hebrew, and then we may perchance both understand and reply. Our position is, that God has spoken to the world; that to make his communications operative, he would cause them to be reduced to writing; and that if he have so spoken, he would accompany his messages to mortals with adequate proof that those messages were *his alone*. We are ready to meet any honest and explicit objection to the Bible being an Inspired communication from the Deity to the human race; but we

insist on an explicit avowal of what further evidence is demanded to make the moral, the historical, and the intellectual portions of the argument satisfactory to sound reason. We may be told, perhaps, that the historical proofs are not supported by the testimony of hostile or independent pagan or Jewish writers. Whose fault is that, as far as this is true? Many of our sacred books were venerable for antiquity when the earliest productions of pagan literature arose; and as to ancient Jewish witnesses, are not the testimonies of Sirach and of the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel, of Philo and of Josephus, at least as veritable as the best of the classical historians who record the events of the Mithridatic war, the expulsion of the Tarquins, or the sack of Carthage? But suppose we had several of these hostile and independent writers of the Jewish and pagan schools, bearing distinct testimony, however positive, to the Inspired nature of the Old Testament. Such witnesses could not prove the fact; for we should still ask, How did they know this, and what proof have we, that they spoke the truth? But we have been told, that the Inspired writings of the apostles would have been more credible, if some antagonist Jewish authors had borne witness to their Inspiration. But of what advantage would such witnesses have been? for we should have asked, If these antagonist authors knew the apostles to be Inspired, why did they not believe them? And if they did not follow their convictions, they would not be more likely to follow historic truth.

This unreasoning spirit of disbelief has suggested, "that Jehovah might have set the question of Inspiration at rest for ever by working a miracle to prove the fact." We aver that all the miracles were in part wrought for this very purpose; but to humour for a moment this illogical incredulity, we will imagine God to have uttered, in a distinct voice from the sky that the Scriptures were Inspired; or that with the same design he had wrought some signal change in nature,—as the removal of a mountain, or changing the course of the Jordan; you perceive

we must *then* have depended entirely, for belief of these facts, on the testimony of those who witnessed them. We have been told that "the Inspiration of the sacred authors would have been more unquestionable if their works had contained more distinct prophecies." How would this have succeeded? *Number* does not decide at all in many departments of enquiry. If the electric spark concentrates the vaporous cloud and produces rain *once*, we have discovered the law, and what more do we need? If an ounce of iron be fusible by fire, or if one chemical test be successful in demonstrating the presence of a poison, or in neutralizing an acid, we have found the truth; a thousand experiments could not make the truth more true; and if the truth had not been there it could not have been found at all. And if one prediction, well-attested, was as certainly fulfilled, he who uttered the prophecy must have spoken under Inspiration. We have more than a hundred such well-attested, and as truly fulfilled, predictions; and we cannot help feeling that he who rejects such proof "would not be persuaded though one rose from the dead." We think it a remarkable fact, strongly confirmative of our cause, that the opponents *cannot* suggest a single method by which the proof of Inspiration could have been made more complete. As, it is a vast combination of historic, of moral, and of literary evidence, such as is not producible on any other topic, than that of the divine origination of the Scriptures; while the opponents only base their antagonist theories on hypercriticism, ethnologic traditions, imaginary antiquities, anonymous excerpts, philologic guesses, poetic glosses, and psychologic hypotheses; these, with brazen assertions, a pedantic array of authors of doubtful existence, and of books that no one has ever seen, of fancies more wild, and terms more paradoxical than would be tolerated in any other controversy, are the ware with which our opponents chiefly trade.

Let us now turn for an instant from the books of Scripture, and their writers, and from miracles, and prophecy, and history, and view the question of Inspiration in its relation to the Divine Being himself. We that

rejoice in the knowledge that "our God is the God of Salvation," ascribe to that glorious Being, as one of His first attributes, omniscience. If omniscient, he knows better than we do, both the laws by which opinion operates, and by which faith grows. He must know this, for he has declared that "Without faith it is impossible to please God." But we cannot believe what we will, nor when we will, but only as the evidence of a proposition elicits our credence. We can really believe nothing if there be not a sufficiency of evidence to sustain our faith. There must be, then, a sufficiency of attainable evidence in existence that this is the word of God, for we are made responsible for believing it; as Jesus declared, "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Would it be just in God to demand our faith in the propositions of a book that was not attended with ample proof of its divine authorship? Is it conceivable that He who has so plainly impressed on all the works of nature the vestiges of his benevolence, and who has given to the material universe, so striking a subordination of all its beneficent designs to the use of man, should leave him in helpless uncertainty on those moral questions that most involve his everlasting happiness? If God be himself perfect, he must desire the restoration of his imperfect creatures; and he has himself declared, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner;" can we then suppose that he who thus declares it is his pleasure that we should live in happiness for ever, would withhold the most vital of all the means by which that happiness alone becomes attainable? He must know that the mere assertions of Moses, David, and Paul, without positive proof of their being also the exposition of his will, would never pass for anything more than mere assertions in this world, and especially among the more intelligent. He, above all, must know that there can be no permanent confidence where there is no absolute certainty; and that there can be no conviction of absolute certainty without adequate evidence; and that the evidence must be imperishable, accessible to all, and so various, as to be

adapted to every order of mental character. Review these statements, and the suggestions to which they will give rise, and ask your reason—and remember that God is infinite reason,—and your heart,—and do not forget that it was fashioned at first after his own,—whether it be possible to believe that Jehovah, so considerate of our every natural want, so provident even of our tastes, so thoughtful of our formation and weakness, would withhold adequate proof that “He spake in times past by the prophets unto the fathers,” and in later periods by his Son, whom he has appointed to judge the world? I would sooner believe that God is not perfect, nor omniscient, nor possessed of all power, than, being possessed of every quality of infinite perfection, He should fail to bestow that sufficient evidence of what his will is; and without the knowledge of which you and I must alike be lost.

Most freely and humbly I admit, that I may have failed to elaborate this evidence of Inspiration adequately, either from want of attention, or diligence, or force of thought, or felicity of expression, or scholarship; but I cannot consent to admit that a sufficiency of evidence on the question of Inspiration does not exist. It does exist; for my consciousness, my judgment, my fear and hope, my thirsting for perfection, my love and gratitude to God, and my fellowship to man, which are but echoes of the voice of the Eternal, all proclaim that the handwriting of Deity is still on the wall. We, like the savants of Babylon, may, from our pride or ignorance fail to decipher it, but God will raise up another Daniel to unlock the secret, and reveal the sinner’s doom. Meantime it is our duty to search, read, and inwardly digest, all the phenomena of this mighty problem, if we be discontented with the investigations that are now drawing to a close. Nor is it less our duty to remember, that we have no right to dictate to the Judge of all the earth how he shall apportion and distribute and shape the proofs of any truth He has been graciously pleased to reveal.

In closing this address I would add one caution, and remind you of one fact. The caution is, beware of hyper-

philosophy. There are such things as logical affectation, and morbid incredulity; as pride that courts the singularity of being thought a great doubter; as a pedantic reason that struts in the boots of Hobbes, and the pantaloons of Voltaire, and aims at nothing more noble than the life of a disputant, and the scholarship of a quibbler. You Christian men, be honest with your own doubts, and treat those of your neighbour with forbearance and respect; but never suffer yourselves to be induced to fight this battle in the bog, or in the dark. Give no quarter to the reasoning charlatan, and lend no ear to the frivolous philosopher, and read no trash of the logical bombastes, and fear no inuendos of the profane witling, or irreverent epigram of the German poetaster, or any query, however startling, that would impeach the stability of your faith, or impugn the veracity of the Sacred Writers. These are times of temptation to the intellectual discipline of Jesus. A new science never arises but it is made to challenge Revelation to an array at arms; a new impulse has seldom been given to mind, of which the devil has not availed himself, either to employ his unconscious menials in an attempt to prove that the religion of Christ is opposed to reason, or antagonist to free search, or inimical to progress, or a bar to liberty, or a check on human society, or the foe of philanthropy. These are devices, old as the magicians of Egypt, but they change their habiliments and tactics to suit the temper of every age. Ours is the era of a radical temper, that affects to examine the roots of all power, and of every system; and in unison with this bias, the war on the Inspired documents has been long waged, and is yet far from being closed. The quiescent, the letterless, and the fearful Christian may cry for peace, and would even drive the Vandals from the gates of Zion by donatives and soft words; but we must fight and expel. "The pearl of great price" must remain ours, or become theirs. There can be no armistice, no compromise with the enemies of the Lord. Unlimited submission of the understanding to the book of Revelation, is the guerdon for which we contend. Inactivity would thin our ranks;

cowardice would animate our assailants; trimming would peril our honor; refusal of battle would challenge our confidence, as retreat would betray our fear. Let every servant of the Lord come willingly to the field, for "we wrestle not against flesh and blood" only, but "against spiritual wickedness in high places;" and we contend for a doctrine that is the bond and pledge of all. Let him that can write, ponder well first; and he that reads, let him read aloud, that others may hear; and he that has but one talent, let him cultivate it with tenfold diligence; and he that has wealth but does not write, let him circulate what a brother that has no wealth has prepared. God expects every servant of his to be up betimes, and to be a faithful watchman of the holy city, and "blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

FIFTH LECTURE.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE INSPIRED AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

"Take heed that no man deceive you."—Matthew xxiv, 4.
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Similar cautions to that contained in our text are frequent both in the Old and New Testaments; and the spirit of these words will be found freely interfused throughout the Scriptures, where Moses and the prophets, and Jesus and his disciples, in various modes, warn their respective auditors to beware of pretended teachers from God, of false prophets, and pseudo Christs; urging their warnings by the consideration that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and that "if it were possible, he would deceive even the elect." We have not time, at present, even to elicit the forcible argument that might be drawn from this class of cautionary passages of the sacred writings in favor of their Inspired quality; but we may remark, that they carry with them a grand air of truthfully Divine consciousness, and are as remote as possible from what those books would have been if ordinary compositions, or from any romance writings, which, though having a historic basis, prove the fabulous nature of their contents

by their strained but unsuccessful efforts to preserve an appearance of verisimilitude.

In a former lecture I hinted to you that these arguments for Inspiration would be greatly increased in power, if we were to take each of the books of the Bible in turn, and subject them to individual examination, how far the books thus singly considered could make good their claims to be regarded as Inspired documents. Now I propose this evening to suggest to you how this important work might be accomplished, by selecting one of the historical, one of the prophetic, and one of the dogmatic books of Scripture; namely, Genesis, Isaiah, and the Epistle to the Philippians.

Hitherto you have noticed how little use I have made of the opinions of antiquity on this subject: the truth is, I do not like to lay too great a burden on the dead; and always in my various teachings, you have perceived that I depend but slightly on the authority of even our highest spiritual ancestors. But I will assume, on the authority of those Jewish and Gentile elders, who had better means than we have of knowing, the Mosean authorship of the book of Genesis. Of some books it is not necessary that we should know the author, provided we are assured of the truth of their contents; but as this book of Genesis is the basis of both Judaism and Christianity, and indeed of the moral history of man, and of the foundation of the Divine government of God among men, the real authorship is of the first importance. Now *that*, so far as my knowledge extends, was by universal consent, ages before the birth of Christ, assigned to Moses alone, and especially by that Hebrew people, who, for more than a thousand years, preserved his autographic originals as the most sacred of their archives. If Moses wrote the book of Genesis, it must be remembered that he gave the highest proofs of his sincerity by relinquishing his connections with the ruling family in Egypt, and by the piety of his whole life; and we have for proof of his Inspiration, his own assertions, the miracles which he performed, and the predictions which he uttered; and, above all, the strange elevation of

two and a half to three millions of slaves, suddenly elevated into a nation, with a complete body of laws, different from, and more complete than, those possessed by any other nation of ancient or modern times. If the book of Genesis were *not* written by Moses, then we are completely in the dark on every moral question affecting the human species. But the cavillers at the Pentateuch may set it down for an absolute certainty, that we, or any one professing but decent homage to the laws of logical verity, shall require a *greater* body of *absolute proof* that Moses *did not* write the book of Genesis, than we already possess that he *did*, before we consent to throw aside that invaluable document. And we shall treat with the utmost scorn any writer, English, American, German, or French, who expects us to relinquish our Pentateuch, merely because he has swept the kennels of sceptical literature diligently, and has collected a large heap of scraps of objective matter, on chronology, and æsthetics, on science, or on language, and metaphysics, and pompously dignifies his collection with the name of "A Philosophical Theory of the Pentateuch." Absolute logical proof, and solid historic evidence, sound philosophical principles, and self-evident maxims of moral certainty, are the only things we shall deign to listen to on the subject of the Pentateuch. Such are the grounds on which we believe the Pentateuch to be the Inspired work of Moses, and such only are the grounds on which it can be discussed whether it is not.

1.—Quitting, however, for the occasion, the last four books of Moses, what evidence does the book of Genesis afford of its being a composition written under the direction of the Spirit of God? In the first place, this book contains a considerable portion of matter relative to a period prior to the creation of man, and which the human intellect could therefore never have known without supernatural instruction. Of this kind are, the records of the progress of creation, the counsel of God in the formation of man, his reasons for creating woman, his judgment of the finished creation, his consecration of the seventh day, and his preparation of Eden. It is quite clear that as these

refer to a time before man, Moses must have derived the knowledge of them from some Divine source, or the accounts themselves must be fabulous. That they were not fabulous, we have the facts, that while Moses was thus narrating at the time these ante-historic materials, God identified himself with Moses by the two-fold gift of prophecy and miracles; and that Jesus Christ confirms this part of the Mosaic record, any one may know from consulting his discourses.

2.—The book of Genesis records the feelings of the Almighty when man had become a transgressor (iii, 22); what he declared when all society had corrupted itself (vi, 3); how he resolved to punish the antediluvian race (vi, 7); what was the actual progress and condition of the deluge (vii, 19); how that catastrophe was effected (vii, 11); and by what means the diluvial waters were drained from the earth (viii, 1-4); and what Jehovah declared on the occasion of Noah's sacrifice (viii, 21, 22). To these we have to add, the views entertained by the Divine Being respecting the builders of Babel (xi, 5-8); what God thought of the conduct of Abraham (xv, 6); what he purposed respecting Sodom (xviii, 20); how Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (xix, 24, 25); and that God appeared in a dream to Abimelech (xx, 3, 6, 7). We have in this book also the narrative of God's recognition of the sufferings of Ishmael (xxi, 17); and in xxii, 1, we learn the reason why Abraham offered his son Isaac; also, that God appeared to Jacob in the dream of the ladder (xxviii, 13); the appearance of God in a dream to Laban (xxxi, 24); how God regarded the conduct of Onan (xxxviii, 10); that the cause of Joseph's prosperity was the Divine blessing, and that God blessed Potiphar's household for Joseph's sake, (xxxix, 2, 5, 21, 23). To these we must also subjoin the prefiguration of fourteen years of the Egyptian history in the dream of Pharaoh (xli, 17-24). Now a moment's thought must convince you that no human intellect, without extraordinary illumination from heaven, could by any possibility have attained to the knowledge of these matters. If they be

facts, Moses could only have learned them by Inspiration; and if they be not facts, they can only be fabulous; and in that case, the other parts of the book of Genesis are incredible, and away goes all the primeval history that we have of the early races of mankind. But if these things be merely legends, how does it happen that they are so harmonious? that they accord so exactly with real history? and that they carry with them so remarkable a *vraisemblance*, and have none of the customary lineaments of fiction?

3.—The book of Genesis contains also a number of predictions, which constitute a strong collateral proof of the Inspired origin of this document. I will not demand your attention to so minute a gleaning on this head as on the preceding one, and for this obvious reason,—that the prediction of future events is by common belief admitted to be one of the things that all men are incapable of performing, and the prerogative of Deity alone. A hundred years before the deluge occurred, the book of Genesis records that Jehovah made it known to Noah, who, after he left the ark, pronounced also the destiny that would befall the descendants of his three sons. When Abraham and Sarah were about a century old, God foretold the birth of Isaac, and that within a year; and he also foretold, before his birth, the character and futurity of Ishmael. To Abraham Jehovah also predicted the multiplication of his descendants through Isaac, their future return to Egypt, their enslavement there for four hundred and thirty years, and their liberation, and the punishment of their aggressors. Joseph predicts the fortune of his fellow prisoners in the jail of Potiphar, and subsequently the seven years of plenty, and the following seven years of famine, that awaited the whole land of Egypt. And lastly, on this particular, I would remind you of that remarkable series of prophetic descriptions of the geographic and industrial condition, by Jacob, of his descendants; all of which prophecies have been most remarkably fulfilled. If the prophecies were not fulfilled, they were never uttered, and so Moses has merely written a novel instead of a true

history. But if the prophecies were uttered and fulfilled, there is no deliverance from the conclusion that the book in which they are recorded is an Inspired document, unless it be maintained, that in old time men had some secret art by which they could foreknow; which is not only contradicted by Peter, but by a greater than Peter, and all the apostles, or than Moses and all the prophets, I mean by the *universal experience of mankind.*

4.—The book of Genesis records a great number of communications made by the Deity to various persons, under very different circumstances, and relative to as great a variety of topics. The speeches that God addressed to Adam and Eve, to the devil and Cain, to Noah, to Abraham and Sarah, to Isaac and Jacob, to Abimelech and Laban, and to Hagar, Lot, and Ishmael, are recorded *verbatim* in this precious little volume called the Genesis. Is it to be believed that these are mere poetic inventions of the author, and that these speeches were never, in reality, delivered to the persons to whom the Genesis declares they were addressed? Then, instead of history, the book of Genesis is a falsehood in this particular; and if in this, who is to guarantee to us, that since it may not, according to this notion, be true in this particular, it is yet authentic history in all others? Or let us admit that these speeches were delivered as they are related by the book of Genesis; it is natural to enquire, how,—unless Moses were divinely aided by the same power of the Spirit of God which in later times “brought all things to the remembrance” of the apostles,—could he thus have been put in possession of these speeches, which if collected and exhibited at one view would form a material portion of the book itself? We all know the difficulty of retaining accurately even for a single day, or an hour, the words of one sentence, though we may never be able to forget the sentiment; and how often words that we have loved from childhood, that are ranged in poetic measure, and have been repeated by us a hundred times, after all pass from our memory, and we are never able accurately to remember them again. Words are important in proportion to the

dignity of the speaker, and to the purport for which they were uttered; and the words of God implicate both himself and us for ever. Is it to be imagined, then, that after God had, at different times, thus addressed himself to sixteen different persons, as recorded in the Genesis, that he would leave his words to the chances of mere traditional preservation,—important as those words were to the existence of the Hebrew race, and through them to the faith and comfort of all believers in truth? I, for one, cannot believe *that*. If we wish to preserve anything accurately, we reduce it to writing. All men agree in this sentiment, and we have all derived this opinion, as I believe, through remote antiquity, from Jehovah himself, who Inspired Moses thus to record in writing what He had addressed to his creatures during a period of two thousand three hundred and seventy years. There is only one way of evading the force of this inference, that Moses must have acquired this knowledge of the Divine speeches by Inspiration; and that is, by supposing that Cain carefully preserved in writing the words God addressed to him; that Adam did the same to those that were communicated to himself and his wife; that Hagar and Lot likewise preserved their records in writing; that Laban and Abimelech also made the same record of the voice of God addressed to them; and that the Patriarchs kept an inventory of all the messages that they were favored with from the Ruler of the universe; and what is far more incredible than all this, that these various records were miraculously preserved, and all fell into the hands of Moses at last! Those who can believe this, or that though the speeches of God were not reduced to writing, they were faithfully transmitted from sire to son for twenty-three centuries, or that a pious man would record, in a grave history, so many imaginary speeches of Deity to mortals, can believe anything, and are insane on one point; for they have become insensible to the force of logical conviction, and have subdued their understanding to their will. It is waste of time to reason with such persons; for they who stultify themselves on the first principles of argumentative truth,

can never be depended on to appreciate the proportionate force of evidence, or to follow their convictions.

5.—The book of Genesis contains a number of passages that would never have been recorded by a historian who was only actuated by the ordinary motives that influence mankind. All writers, in all countries, have been accustomed to speak as well of their ancestors as possible,—to apologise for their faults, and to give the utmost prominence to their virtues. We shall, however, look in vain to the book of Genesis for an illustration of this universal bias of authorship. So far from this being the case, it is quite otherwise. For though Moses was a thorough Hebrew, loved his nation, and relinquished the greatest prospective advantages to share their lot when they were only slaves, we find that he neither flatters their prejudices, conceals their faults, nor magnifies their virtues. He records a fact that is at least revolting to our ideas of propriety,—that Jochebed, his mother, was her husband's aunt; that his own sister, Miriam, was a treacherous and imperious woman; that his only brother was a coward, and destitute of requisite moral courage; and that he, Moses himself, had been guilty of homicide; that even after God appeared to him in the fiery bush, he was reluctant to engage in his service; that he was pusillanimous in the prospect of meeting Pharaoh; that he neglected the circumcision of his own children; and was sometimes, even while employed in the Divine service, prone to give way to feelings of unreasonable anger. No historian can be cited, of any character, who does not incline to speak favorably of his people and their ancestors; but short as the Genesis is, we find in it those melancholy vestiges of the daughters of Lot, of the drunkenness of Noah, of the incest of Tamar, and of the infamy of Onan. Moses also admits the intriguing spirit of Jacob in the earlier part of his life; his uxorious and crafty habits; his defraud of Esau; the perfidy of Jacob's sons; the sale of Joseph; the falsehood with which his brethren concealed their crime; the polygamy of Abraham; the avarice of Lot; the pride and unkindness of Sarah; the fretful vanity

of Rachel; the treachery and prejudices of Rebekah; and above all, the perfidious murders which his own tribe of Levi had perpetrated at Shechem. We say this kind of history is *not natural*; it has no family bias, no self-love, no prejudices, no tendency to national glorification, no flattery of the great, and no egotism of the author; and to our mind, considering the topics, the age, the man, and his subsequent life, no solution so naturally explains all these anomalies as to believe,—as the great, the good, and the erudite of nearly forty centuries have done,—that Moses was an Inspired man of God, who “spake and wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.”

6.—There is one other feature in the book of Genesis that we must detain you a few minutes to dilate upon. I refer to the *animus* or spirit of the entire composition of the book of Genesis. It is difficult, perhaps, to explain what we mean by the spirit of a document apart from the grammatical sense of the words; but that the spirit of a composition is a different thing from that, every one accustomed to read will readily admit. Two authors have written a life of Cromwell; both agree in the main facts, and draw those facts from the same sources; but one of them, being in harmony with Cromwell’s ideas, infuses the spirit of eulogy and approbation through his narrative; while the other, whose sentiments were averse to those of Cromwell, pervades his work with a feeling of censure. The one writer loves his subject, and glows throughout it; the other hates and sneers. This difference is what we mean by the spirit of a composition. Now what is the spirit that pervades the book of Genesis? Is it that of truth rejoicing in the progress of whatever is veracious and virtuous, and lamenting the existence and growth of sin? Or is it the spirit of falsehood, abounding in shifts, subtleties, and pretensions, apologising for wickedness, and sneering at good men? We are not asking occult questions, but such as any plain and intelligent reader of the Scriptures is fully able to answer. What is the impression with which you rise from the perusal of the book of Genesis? Is it that the book was written by a man who

had only his own glorification in view, who was no friend to God, and who only cared about his fellow creatures so far as they promoted his wealth or his pleasure? We believe that no candid opposer of the Scriptures will affirm that such is the animus of the book of Genesis. Early and singular a production as it is, the author keeps himself invisible, and does not inweave his name even on the hem of the immortal fabric. And while there are none of the frailties of the man in this composition, there are none of the follies and the prejudices of the author. Prodigious as are the subjects on which he treats, he never indulges his imagination with those dilatations to which writers are prone; where he touches on the obscure, he adds no conjectures; and those passages that are capable of comment, such as the domestic life of the Patriarchs, or that were in themselves beautiful, Moses does not linger upon, according to the usage of those authors who are enchanted with their own flowers. The book of Genesis, although written without the advantage of pre-existent models, bears in its very style a divine air: it is beautiful without being ornate, simple but not vulgar, terse beyond parallel, but all sunbeam; minute, and yet not trivial, and profound, but far removed from the mysterious and the speculative. In short, Inspiration appears where it ought to appear,—less in the transient and simple agent, the writer, than in the document itself, that is at once law, history, and prediction, and was designed to outlive the colossal mountains, or the sun that pours his glittering light down their time-worn brows. Such are some of our reasons for believing in the Inspired authority of the book of Genesis.

Let us now examine one of the prophetic books, and ascertain what evidence it yields of its claim to Inspiration, and we will select the first that presents itself,—Isaiah. There is a propriety also in the selection of this prophet, of which we were not so well aware until we had subjected the book to a long and severe individual analysis. For to be familiar with the book of Isaiah, is to be instructed comprehensively in the office of the prophet, and the nature of his labours. When we speak of a prophet, we

usually limit the sense to one who predicts future events; but the prophet of Jehovah was one who either foretold the future, or was the preacher of his age,—who wrought miracles, or who sometimes was employed only to deliver messages from God to particular persons, and at others to offer public prayer, to write sacred songs, to compose history, or to perform symbolic actions to attract the attention of man to some truths which God willed him to know. And in Isaiah we have instances of *all* these different employments in which the prophets were versed. But what is the result of our analysis of this book? Hear me attentively. We find that in ninety-seven places in this short composition the prophet solemnly declares that he is delivering the words of Jehovah; and he makes this declaration explicitly, and in various forms of affirmation. Forty-two of the sections of this book are purely prophetic, and nearly all these predictions have been remarkably fulfilled. Thirty portions of this composition are dogmatic, and composed of arguments, expostulations, encouragement, satires, comparisons, and appeals to historic facts. And there are sixty paragraphs of this book of Isaiah, in which the Divine Being addresses himself in the first person to men, without the interlocution of the prophet. In many passages the prophet declares that he spoke under the teaching of the Spirit of God; and in at least two passages, (viii, 1, and xxx, 8,) Isaiah declares that he was commanded to commit his prophecies to writing; and of some of his communications he gives the time, the place, the manner, and the circumstances in which he received them from the Almighty. Here, then, is a small body of extraordinary facts which carries us to one of two conclusions:—either Isaiah was the Inspired prophet of the Lord, and uttered only what he was commanded to convey to mankind, or he was a deceiver, and has filled his book with ninety-seven falsehoods, and with fables innumerable. If he were a true prophet, his predictions would be fulfilled: are they so? His prophecies specifically relate to Judea, and Jerusalem; to the captivity, and its termination; to Assyria, Babylon, and Media,

with Persia; to Moab, Damascus, Arabia, and Ethiopia; to Sidonia and Tyre; to Ephraim, and Egypt; to Rab-shakeh, Pharaoh, and Hezekiah; to Cyrus, John the Baptist, and the virgin mother of Jesus Christ; to the life, the death, the repudiation, the sufferings, the glory, and the doctrines of Messiah; to the incorporation of the Gentiles into his kingdom; and to the abolition of idolatry. The greater portion of these predictions are fulfilled, and others are now in the process of verification. And the *animus* of the whole book, is that of a man who loved and trusted God absolutely; who was deeply convinced of his own call to the prophetic office; who everywhere exhibits an ardent desire to promote the reign of pure knowledge, and perfect virtue; and who labours intensely to expel erroneous opinions from the intellect, and vicious desires from the heart of mankind. We defy the criticism of any school, or any scholasticism, to deny that this is a just analysis of the prophet Isaiah's book; or to show that it does not possess the spirit we have alleged it to contain; to prove that one falsehood is to be found in any part of the composition; that one of its moral doctrines is out of harmony with the other parts of the Bible; or that one of the prophecies referring to times past has not been fulfilled. Now we have only spoken of one prophet, and you must not forget that we have the compositions of sixteen others, which, upon examination, would yield still more remarkable results. All these prophets professed to receive their messages from God,—all were good men, who would not lie,—all harmonise in their predictions, as well as in their moral doctrines,—and all their vaticinations that allude to times past have been fulfilled. On these grounds, then, am I asking you to enslave your reason, or do I not rather invite you to follow its highest and soundest dictates, when I call upon you to admit that the book of Isaiah contains full proof of its being an Inspired document?

We will now proceed to examine a composition altogether different, namely, Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, and ascertain whether it also does not yield internal evidence that it is a theopneustic document. We only ask

you to admit that this epistle was written by Paul,—an opinion which, so far as I know, was never questioned by those contemporaries who had the means of ocular demonstration. I must remind you that Paul was a vehement enemy of Christianity till about seven years after the resurrection of Christ; that he became a convert under miraculous circumstances; and that, some eighteen or twenty years subsequently, in his Macedonian tour, he visited the famous city of Philippi, where his labours issued in the reclamation to God of Lydia, of the Pythoness, and of the Jailor; and that he made a second visit to this city in the year A.D. 59, or six years after the former visit. But it appears that it was not till the year A.D. 62, or nine years after the apostle's first visit to Philippi, that he addressed this epistle to that memorable christian church. This document, like all the others that form a part of the sacred canon, has been often subjected to an inquisitorial investigation, both by the antagonists of Paul and by the believers in Christ; but the former have been obliged to admit that the epistle contains at least a dozen historical references, which have all been proved to be remarkably accurate. But I lay no other stress on that fact than as it authenticates the production, and removes from it all suspicion of being an imaginary letter. But what proofs does it contain, that it is either an Inspired document, or a gross and impudent forgery? The following appears to my judgment sufficient evidence that the Epistle to the Philippians is entitled to its place in the New Testament. The extraordinary interest taken by the apostle in the spiritual prosperity of the Philippians, with whom he had no prior connection,—an interest that displays itself in many forms of affectionate anxiety,—is at least natural to the character of the apostle, who professes to be the authorised servant of Christ. Pursuant to the conviction that he was so, Paul assumes in this epistle the right to control the evangelistic services of Timothy and Epaphroditus. He uses, in many parts of the letter, the language of authority, and commands the Philippians what virtues to foster, and what faults to avoid. He addresses the

church less in the hortative than in the imperative mood. In the second chapter, the writer has given an exposition of the pre-existent state of Jesus, and even records his thoughts in that state; and in the following verses he utters what must be regarded as rash and dictatorial, if it were not true, and himself Inspired. In the ninth verse he states what mere reason could never, by its native light, have known; and in the next chapter (ii, 17,) he exhibits himself as a model of christian excellence, which, if he were not Inspired, was a violation of modesty. In the twentieth verse of the same chapter, the author violates the laws of humility, if he had not an Inspired warrant so to write. He not only requires the Philippians to regard him as an example to them, but promises that God would supply their wants and promote their peace, if they obeyed his instructions. Connect the authoritative manner in which the apostle has written this epistle, with the spirit that prevails throughout it, and which is everywhere eminently indicative of a hallowed temper, of the utmost benevolence, of zeal for the divine glory, of a desire to augment the happiness of the world, and also with the style of the composition, and with the fact that this tractate, desultory as it may appear to some, is in entire harmony with the other moral writings of Scripture, and remember that this author was both endowed with the gift of miracles and of prophecy, and you must feel that the Epistle to the Philippians yields as much proof of its theopneustic origin as reason could desire. It was so, or Paul was a deceiver; but even if it could be demonstrated that he might be a deceiver, although possessed of the gift of working miracles and of predicting the unknown, (which, however, it cannot,) it never can be demonstrated that a deceiver would quit honor for infamy, wealth for poverty, ease for hardship, the society of the literary and the eminent, for that of the uneducated and the degraded;—that he would be more eminently moral after he became a deceiver than he was before, and that he would do all these unnatural things without an assignable motive,—all which absurdities must be maintained if we deny that

Paul was Inspired, and that the Epistle to the Philippians is a divinely-authoritative document.

We have thus shown you, by a glance at the interior qualities of three out of the sixty-six books of Scripture, what evidence they are capable of yielding in favor of their supernatural construction, when individually examined. An impartial search into the heaven-marks that are to be found in all the other books of Scripture, would issue, not merely in the multiplication of evidence of this kind, but some of them would produce evidences of their Divine contents most idiosyncratic; the book of Daniel, and the Apocalypse, I would mention as instances in the prophetic records; the four Evangelists, and the Acts of Luke, among the historic section; and the books of Job, Psalms, and Proverbs, from that class which, by the Jews, was called the Hagiographa. Fully convinced am I, that whoever performs this labour for the church, as it ought to be done, will surprise both the church and the world, and overwhelm with derision those puny theories which are ever issuing from the forges of scepticism, which carps and strains at the atom and the fraction, and ignores the grand whole; affecting to repudiate Revelation because of its deficient evidence, but expecting the world to believe its bubble systems on such evidence as a mathematician, a historian, or a chemist, would laugh to scorn.

It was my intention, in this concluding lecture, to have considered especially those books of the Old Testament which are usually called Hagiographa, and which are, Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, the two books of Chronicles, the Psalms, the Canticles, the book of Job, and the Proverbs; but after spending much time on that question, I was obliged to forego the pleasure of this investigation. I was reluctant to abandon what my heart and judgment feel to be most important; but I am not willing to over-task your patience, and must therefore defer this part of our enquiry into the subject of Inspiration till some other opportunity shall present itself for its fuller discussion. It now, therefore, remains for you to review what has been already accomplished, and to turn to your own edifi-

cation that which has aided your thoughts,—to investigate what may have excited your fears,—to cherish feelings of adoration and gratitude that our sacred books are so fully armoured with all reasonable evidence,—and to exercise your candour where your judgment differs from us; and you owe it to the subject itself, as we have printed the lectures in a cheap form, to aid their circulation to the utmost of your power. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, the one divinely tempered weapon on which Jehovah depends to win back the apostate and sin-loving world to his bosom and his law; and it is the only one on which the church relies to fight her way into eternity. She had not now been so impotent, so divided, so scorned by the world, so inharmonious in her teachings, so scant of joys, so stunted in growth, so hibernal in study, so restrained in prayer, in faith so wavering, and in doubts so prolific, had the church of God studied his imperishable word more, and minded the gainsayings and speculations of men less. All the eras of spiritual life, whether in Britain, in New England, in Languedoc, in Scotland, in Germany, or of the earlier times, have ever been preceded by a deep and believing study of the Scriptures; and all those rare men and women who have attained to high degrees of fellowship with the Divine nature, to unwonted opulence of spiritual power and blessedness in this life, have always traced their growth to their fervent and continuous study of the law and the testimony, whose hidden vitality came only to be known as affliction quickened study, and study produced faith, prayer, and obedience, and they became unitedly the “witness within.” It has been with the hope of moving ourselves and you to such a study of the words that never perish, that these lectures on Inspiration have been undertaken; as well as to enable you to repel the assailant from the ark, and to foil him in every new device with which he would destroy that only asylum for afflicted thought and guilty conscience, that even he, one day, would give worlds for a welcome to enter in peace.

I propose now to terminate these lectures by noticing some of the leading objections which are usually made to

the doctrine of Inspiration. But before we attempt that, I would direct your attention to the objectors themselves. One is struck with the fact, that these objectors to the theopneustic writings are almost all moderns, there being no antagonist of any mental eminence, that I remember, in the first age of Christianity; and yet *there, pre-eminently*, we should have expected the most strenuous opposers of a doctrine, then so novel, at least to the Gentile mind. It is true that in the second age, Marcion Cerdon and Valentinus only admitted a part of the Scriptures; but their objections are of no force, because if they were Christians at all, they maintained the existence of two Divine Beings, one perfectly good, and the other as evil. In the next age, the Manicheans objected to the Scriptures; yet what their authority is worth, may be seen from the fact, that their leader believed himself to be the Holy Ghost promised by Christ! And *Aetius*, who was leader of one of the Arian sectaries in the fourth age, also rejected the Divine authority of the Scriptures; and he, too, maintained that Christ was a creature, possessing a human form, but not a human mind. In the fifth century, Theodore of Mopsuestia asserted that the book of Job was a pagan poem, and that the Canticle was a mere epithalamium, and compared it with the Symposium of Plato; but his opinions were censured by the fifth Council of Constantinople, in A.D. 553. In the thirteenth age, the combined influence of Aristotelian philosophy, Arabian speculation, and Talmudic tradition, found an exponent in Moses Maimonides, who taught that prophecy may be attained without the spirit of God; and from him arose the notion, unknown to the ancient Jews and the primitive Christians, of degrees of Inspiration; of which he reckoned eight, which Jos. Albus reduced to four, and Abarbanel to three; and from these speculative writers arose the germ of all those ridiculous theories on Inspiration, which have disgraced the literature, more or less, of every modern church. In the sixteenth century, Socinus and his associates taught that the sacred writers were sometimes guilty of *lapsus memoriae*, and that therefore they might err in

minor things. But you perceive that none of these were men who were of a high rank for piety or in intellectual life; and with the exception of Theodore of Mopsuestia, not remarkable for literary qualification to deal with this subject. But *mediocre* as they were, they were the pioneers of the spirit of modern scepticism, which fights in their armour, and uses again their old battered shot. Germany has the unenviable credit of having given an hostile impulse to the doctrine of Inspiration; and in Germany, Semler may be considered as the rationalistic chieftain, under whose banner Paulus, Schuster, Gabler, Ammon, Eichorn, Strauss, and De Wette, with a host besides, have carried on the war; sometimes denying the possibility of Inspiration, and the actuality of propheey; at others, treating the miracles as allegories, and the Pentateuch as a myth. Michaelis, Le Clerc, and Rosenmüller have only claimed partial Inspiration for the sacred documents; and I am humbled to confess how many of our countrymen—as Dick, Wilson, Porteus, and Pye Smith,—have concurred in *that* error.

All the opponents of this doctrine are comprised in the following classes. 1. Those who abnegate religion altogether, and consider all the developments of the religious sentiment as only so many modifications of superstition, and who deny Revelation. 2. Those who profess to regard religion, but demand that in everything that concerns it, reason shall be the supreme judge. 3. Such as are merely formal christians, and either do not see its importance, or, from a criminal negligence, attach no value to Inspiration. 4. Such as admit the Inspired nature of the sacred books, but rest the proofs of this fact on the authority of the Papal Church. 5. Such as concede the divine authority of the Scriptures, but from a fanatical temper would add other books to the class of the Inspired; as the Koran, the Apocrypha of the Old and New Testaments, the book of Mormon, or some works of genius. 6. Those who overrate metaphysical enquiries, and are fascinated with their own imaginative ideals. 7. Such as object to the Inspiration of the Scriptures chiefly on

literary grounds. Or I might more briefly describe these objectors by the *cognomina*,—the atheist, the spurious critic, the false reasoner, the fanatic, the lithe ecclesiastic, the scientific smatterer, and the quibbler; and such descriptions are possibly more felicitous than those which have preceded. Under one or other of these divisions, may be classed all the objectors to the doctrine of Inspiration of whom we have any knowledge. I shall content myself with noticing the leading objections on which three of these classes depend.

1. The rationalistic objector affirms, that he cannot understand Inspiration; that he sees great difficulties in admitting the Scriptures to be Inspired; that the Scriptures themselves do not give a satisfactory account of the mode in which they became Inspired; that Inspiration is not necessary; that the Scriptures do not profess to be Inspired; that these sacred books contain the speeches of evil men and of devils, and quotations from human books, which are said to be incompatible with Inspiration; that Jesus Christ himself wrote nothing; that some of the apostles reason incorrectly; that Inspiration cannot be proved, either from external or internal evidence; and that if the Scriptures be Inspired at all, it is only because they contain Inspired truth, of which, however, they are alleged to be only the history.

2. The objections urged against the doctrine of Inspiration by the literary critics are,—the various readings, defective translations, and conflicting versions; the misquotations in the New Testament from the Old, or the quotations from the Septuagint, instead of from the Hebrew Bible; the diversity of styles observable in the various books of Scripture; the grammatical anomalies in some of the language of the Bible; alleged contradictions said to be found amongst the writers on historic matters and natural science; that the Scriptures contain some things of questionable moral tendency,—as the conduct of Lot's daughters, of Onan, Tamar, Samson, and Delilah,—which are therefore supposed to be unworthy of an Inspired volume; that the Scriptures contain many unimportant

details,—as the notice of Paul's cloak, of the device of the Gibeonites, and of the affection of Rachel; that the books of Ruth, Esther, and Solomon's Song, do not appear sufficiently spiritual to form part of an Inspired book; and that the writers of Scripture occasionally disclaim their own Inspiration,—as Paul, in 1 Corinthians, vii, 6, 10–12.

3. The objections in which the more philosophic opponents abound, are, that the Bible is in a state of antagonism to modern science; and they allege the discoveries of geology as contradicted by the first chapters of Genesis; the Newtonian system of astronomy as opposed to Moses, Joshua, and Isaiah; the Linnaean theory of natural history as opposed to several notices of animal life by Jonah, by Moses, and by David; the modern science of meteorology as subversive of some of the Mosaic allusions; the doctrines of human anatomy, as opposed to the reins and heart that are mentioned in Scripture; the modern state of chronology as contradictory of the Pentateuch, and the later writers of the Old Testament; and the doctrine of arithmetic, as being at war with some of the assertions of the Scriptures.

Do not be alarmed, however. These objections are mere words of a few men in the dark, who, to convey the impression that they are more numerous than they really are, are as vociferous as possible, and imitate the voices of better men than themselves, to inspire needless fear. These menacing phrases have been answered times without number, and can be answered here, if an object of sufficient importance to warrant the labour should arise. But let the suggestion never be overlooked, that many of these objections are absolute falsehoods,—that some are frivolous and absurd,—and that others arise from ignorance of the real subject, or from fixed malice, and consequent incurable prejudice. Some of these objections only apply to a defective translation of the Scriptures, and we are not contending for the Inspiration of translations; many of them are gross exaggerations of fact; some will be found soluble by increased knowledge; and others are only visible to those objectors who stand apart from Christi-

piety, and have no experimental knowledge of its power. Numerous as these objections are, we ourselves could greatly multiply them. It requires but little ingenuity, less learning and reason, and neither piety nor justice, to start an objection in a few words, which it may cost a wise man many pages to answer, if he can answer at all. The pedant, with not a fraction of Morgan's learning, or Spinoza's acuteness,—or the snarler, who has never read a treatise on logic or philosophy in his life, whom a question in vulgar fractions would confound, and a problem in the first book of Euclid bewilder,—may propose a question relating to Inspiration which no living theologian can solve, and which, perhaps, the Deity has good reasons for not bestowing on us the power to solve at all. I take a short course with all these objections, which is this:—I look at their whole number, their nature, and their results, and compare them with the number, the nature, and the results of the whole evidences for Inspiration; and I always find myself weighing the mountain against the feather. No objections to the Divine authority of the Scriptures have any weight with him who has "tasted that the Lord is gracious," and who has "handled and felt the word of life." How so? Because no amount of objective matter can disprove the evidence of his own experience. If you could verify every objection to which I have referred, still there are six facts which you cannot destroy; and which, unless you do destroy, you leave the Bible untouched, and its rays of Inspiration still dart calmly from its brow, as unmoved by the ravings of unbelief as the sun that continues to pour his tide of light upon the world, though philosophers may doubt whether he sheds light at all. These six facts are,

I. A great number of miraculous actions were performed during a period of eighteen hundred years, which were always alleged to have the same tendency by the agents who performed them.

II. That innumerable predictions, uttered within the same period, were not only verified, but were referred, by the men who uttered them, to the same divine source.

III. That the book which contains the record of these facts contains also a large portion of ante-historic and supernatural doctrinal matter; and that the authenticity of this book is supported by the greatest amount of evidence ever collected on one historic fact.

IV. That the nearly forty writers who composed this book, though men of diverse character, attainments, and external circumstances,—some writing history, others only poems; some composing prophecy only, and others didactic instruction—harmonise throughout, in their historic facts, predictions, dogmatic teaching, and in the dramatic parts they performed.

V. That these books were produced in a country never famous for literature, and by a people whose later contemporary authors, though of higher rank, are as inferior as possible; and a people whose subsequent history agrees with the programme of their first lawgiver, nearly four thousand years ago.

VI. That whoever believes the doctrines of this book, and conforms himself to their instructions, attains to a state of moral perfection which none of the systems of human philosophy before the time of Christ, had ever hinted at, or have since improved upon: and that the perfectionising properties of the Bible cannot be denied.

No objections to the doctrine of Inspiration, real or fictitious, malicious or friendly, whether new or old, can destroy these six facts; and before any objection to the doctrine can be of any permanent avail, these facts must be destroyed. Suppose we were to resort to the plan that the opposers of this Scripture doctrine do, and avow that we would not believe the Newtonian system of astronomy until it had been explained to us, in scientific exactitude, “What is light;” or that we would not admit the axioms of geometry, unless we had the anomalies of the geometric ratio fully explained; or that we could not admit the science of meteorology till we were satisfied with the laws of electricity; or that we should repudiate the theory of geology, till its professors explained to us the full history of the Saurian tribes; or that we would refuse obedience

to the civil law, till it had demonstrated which was the best political form of government; or that we could not believe in moral obligation, unless we could be enlightened in the occult *modus* by which conscience moves the moral man. What would the world say of such an objector, and his objections? Would they humour our insanity, or send us to the hospital, or deem us idiots, or regard us as asinine coxcombs whom reason might despair of converting? But unreasonable as such proceedings on our part would be, this is the very course taken by the objectors to the doctrine of Inspiration. They ignore the positive, the proven, and the probable, and after conjuring together all that hostile mind has conceived against the book of God, the retailers of unbelief expect us to credit their guesses, while they deny our facts,—to accept their criticism, though they repudiate our prophecies,—to yield a homage to their theories, while they deny our miracles,—and to believe that they are conscientious, while they contemn our experience of the vitalising power of the truth of God. To such objectors we yield nothing, and have only to say to them in reply, "If your objections are worth anything; they can be demonstrated; and since you deny our moral, and historical, and supernatural evidence, prove them by the demonstration you desire. If you cannot demonstrate the truth of your objections,—and, observe, nothing short of demonstration will be admitted,—you have not only no right to put the Christian system on the defensive, but you have no right to be heard, inasmuch as the man that enters a court without being able to prove his case has no right there; for it is believed, wherever reason is known, that the *onus probandi* lies with the objector."

One word more to the objectors to the Inspiration of the Scriptures. There always appears to us, in all the objections to this doctrine, a number of most gratuitous assumptions of which the objectors seem to be utterly unconscious. For instance, they assume to know what Inspiration is, how it would affect the human mind, and how it ought to have been bestowed; that the sacred writers did not feel that super-rational aid; and that we

have a right to expect that the proofs of Inspiration should accord with our preconceptions. The objectors also seem to imply that the contemporaries of the apostles and the prophets were either less able than we are to investigate the subject, or more unwilling; they attach disproportionate importance to objections, and seem frequently to forget that all human knowledge is liable to exceptive views, and that it is one of the conditions of the highest intelligence, that it has to fight its way into the credence of men. Of all other classes of objectors, however, to the doctrine of Inspiration, the nominally Christian, appears to us the most culpable; for they betray the fortress to the enemy, and either by ill-timed concessions or ill-conditioned charity, admit that which severer thought and extended reading would have taught them was fundamental to the common salvation. It is humiliating beyond measure to think how much damage has been done to the historic verity of the Old Testament by some Christian writers, who have not merely repudiated parts of the book of Daniel, and excluded the books of Ruth, Esther, and the Canticles, from the sacred canon, but who have consented to renounce the authority of that Moses on the subject of the structure of the world, one of whose objects in composing the first chapters of Genesis must have been merely to record that fact. Science must be accorded to Moses and not Moses to science; and we say this, fully aware that science can only be what facts and sound reasoning make it. With pure science, Moses and every other sacred writer will accord, though they will not accord with scientific prepossessions, any more than true science can comport with some of the theologic prejudices that have been imputed to the Hebrew legislator. Let it not be imagined that we deprecate criticism, however rigorous, or discountenance scientific enquiry, which we would have carried on with perfect freedom from all religious theories; or that we have the least sympathy with a faith that has never investigated its own basis. All we demand is, that criticism should remember it is not a judge, but a servant; that science should not forget that

it is only yet in its childhood; and that the spirit of enquiry should ever remember that it does not work by its own light.

Judge then for yourselves, whether our replies to these objections to Inspiration, that have been so often urged and so often refuted, be worthy of your understanding and faith; whether they will abide the trial of severe reason, and are in accordance with facts, history, and the moral laws. Such or better refutation can be produced for the other objections individually, which our space forbids us to particularise. We are willing to believe that many of the objectors are christians, but deplorably deficient either in intellectual power, in literary qualification, in moral aptitude, or in that patient industry, without which no truth can be adequately investigated. We can even admit that there are others who, though not avowedly christians, are honest men, and fling their shafts at the Scriptures because they do not believe them to be true. But the objections themselves only appear to us like quibblings at the sun, puns upon the ocean, or jibes at the tempest, when it makes the mountains groan, and fills all nature with consternation; and it must never be forgotten that some wit is so wanton, and some satirists so bold, that if heaven were bursting for the last doom, the one would jest at the rising world, and the other would carp at disgorging hell.

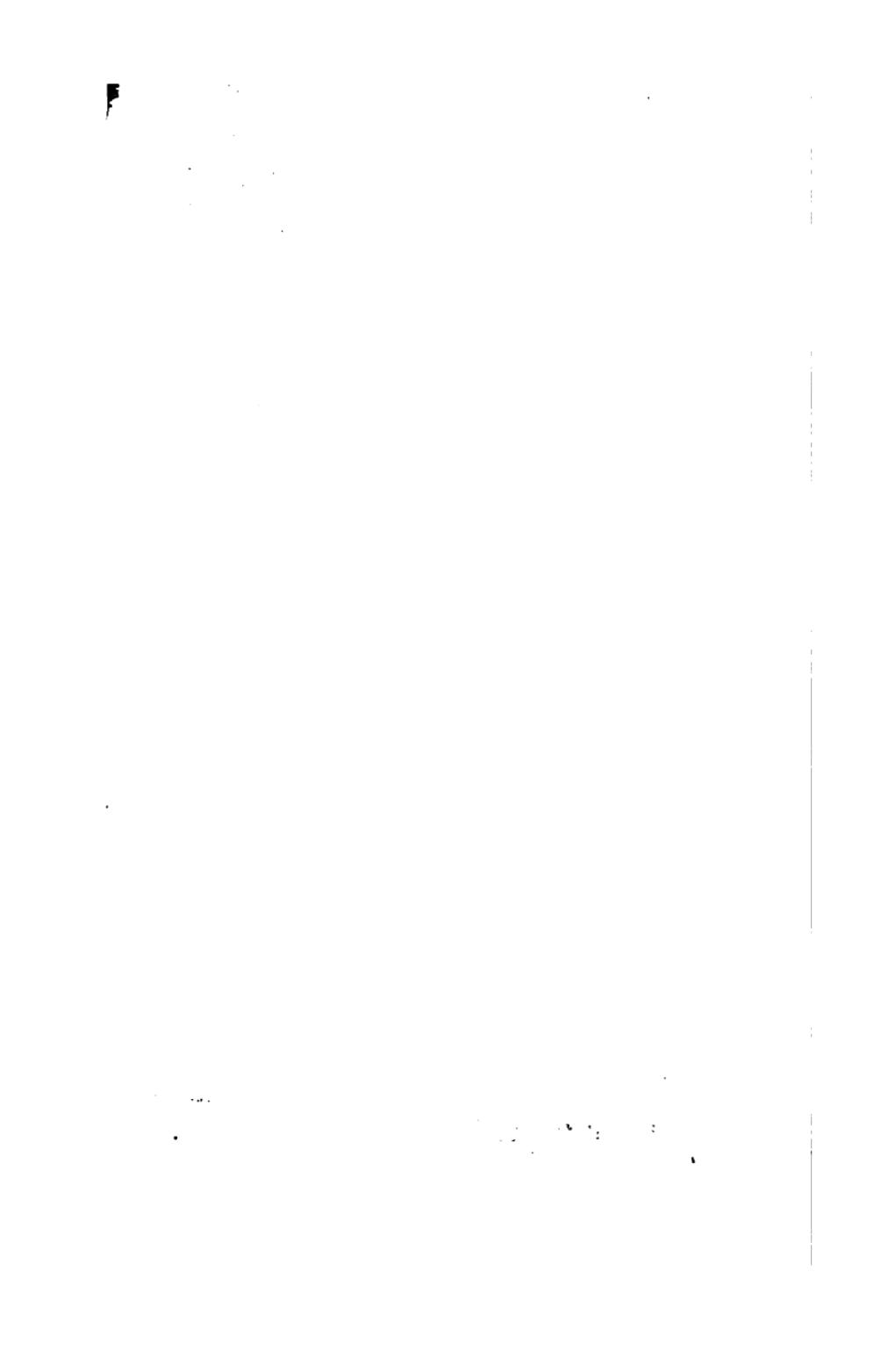
Some present, perhaps, may regret that these lectures have not more formally discussed the question of partial and verbal Inspiration, and that they have not entered more fully into those scholastic topics which usually form a material part of this controversy. My reasons are soon told. Partial Inspiration I repudiate as unphilosophical in theory, and self-destructive in practice; for if only *parts* of the Scripture be Inspired, we need yet another revelation to determine which those parts are. Verbal Inspiration appears to me to extend to all prophecy, and probably to the whole of the Scriptures; for it is difficult to conceive of thoughts without words, and equally difficult to conceive of our possessing an absolute feeling of

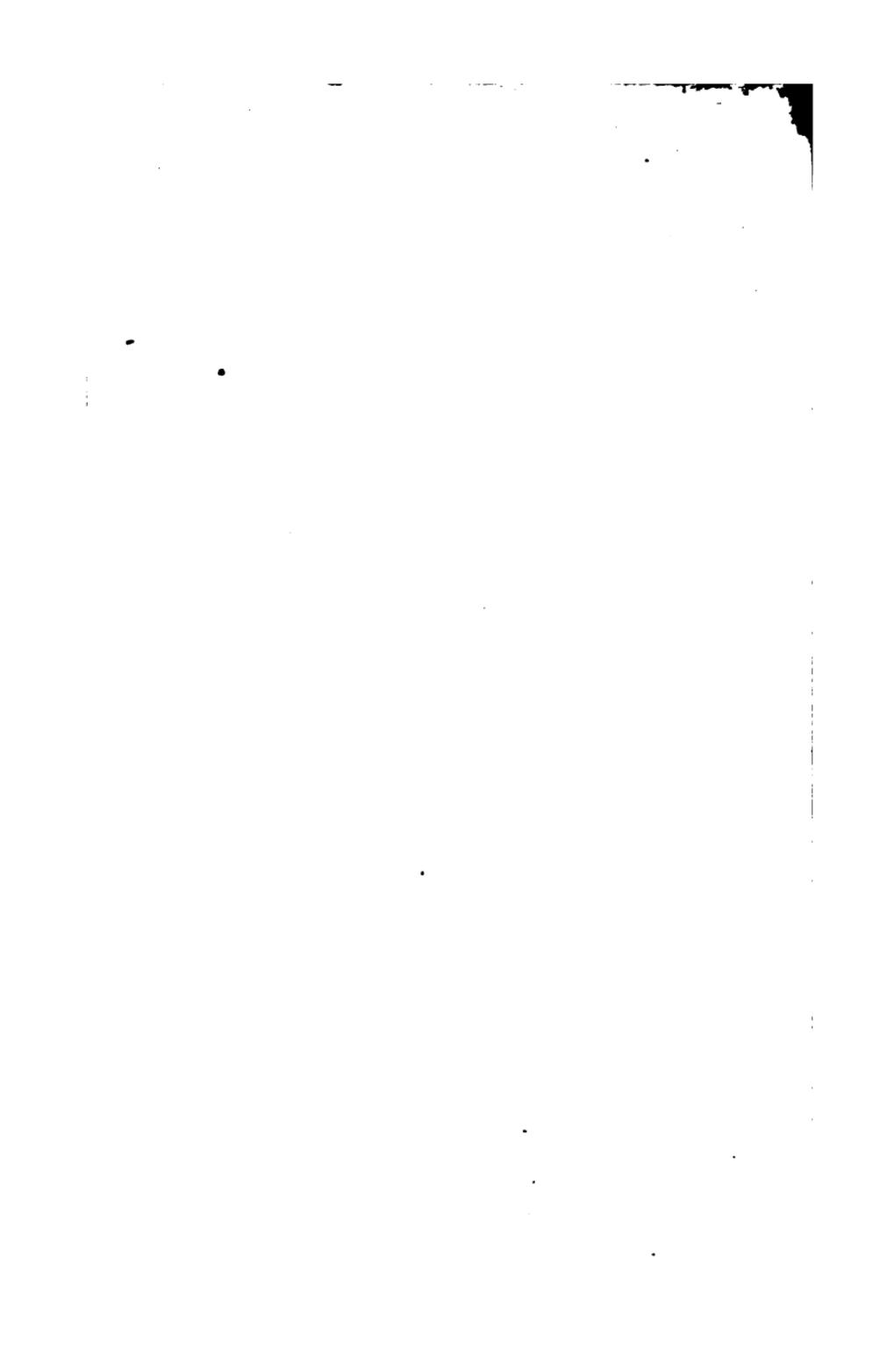
certainty, if the thoughts only were divine, and the words human. It is common to object, that several of the sacred writers who give an account of the same things, use different words; but that, in our judgment, is an invalid objection. For as we may give to twenty different persons a command to do a certain thing, and yet employ different terms in each without either diminishing the sense, or the authority of the mandate, so may the Spirit of God have dictated to Peter, John, and Paul the same truth in different expressions. And my reasons for giving to these lectures so little of the scholastic form, was simply that I knew that the arguments in that form would be unadapted to you. I have preferred to appeal to your reason, to your moral sense, to your experience as christian men, to your knowledge as readers of history and observers of mankind, and above all to your conscience, into whose court I trust you will admit our pleas. And now, dear brethren, may that Spirit that opened the future to the seer of old, and eternity to the apostles, descend frequently on you in a cloud of fire, and in dews of blessing, and on him, the least of all saints, who has thus aided you to estimate, somewhat better, that most lustrous of heaven's many gems, its "great cloud of witnesses." Amen.

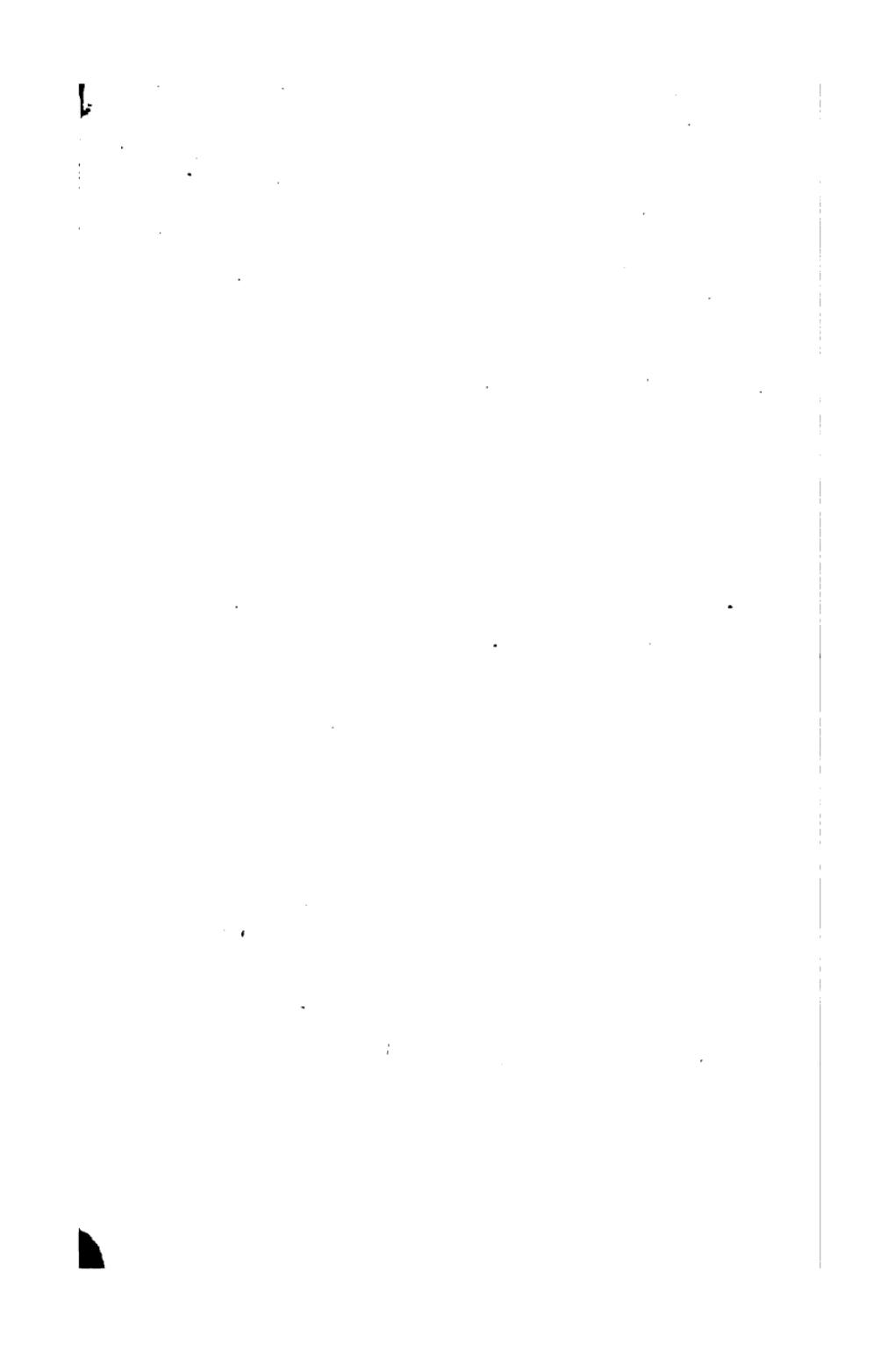
FINIS.

ERRATA.

- Page 7, line 11,—for “colloquintada,” read “colloquintida.”
“ 20, “ 19,—for “Lyels,” read “Lyell.”
“ 89, “ 14,—for “Hegsternberg,” read “Hegstenberg.”
“ 113, “ 12,—for “Petrach,” read “Petrarch.”









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